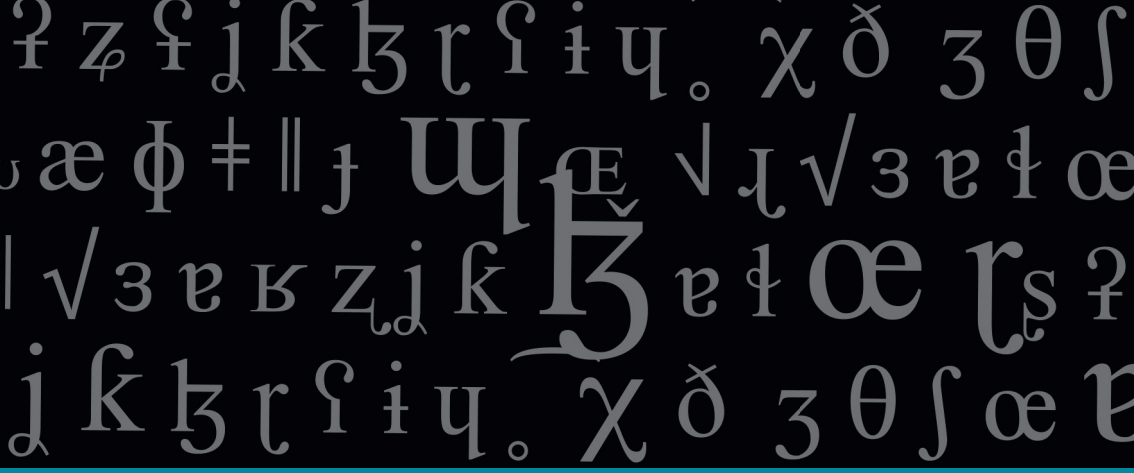

PRAGMATIC MARKERS IN WORLD ENGLISHES

KIND OF AND *SORT OF* AS A CASE IN POINT

LUCÍA LOUREIRO-PORTO

7 monographs

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1. WORLD ENGLISHES: DIVERGENCE IN CONVERGENCE

In its recent history, the English language has undergone unprecedented changes around the world. As English has become a global language, it has encountered new contexts and communities, each leaving its own imprint on the language. This has led to a fascinating and complex phenomenon of language variation in World Englishes, with linguistic features that differ in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and discourse. In this context, a fundamental question arises: do these different varieties of English converge or diverge? In other words, are they becoming more similar or more distinct from each other? This question is not new in linguistics and, in fact, the concepts of dialect convergence and dialect divergence have been the focus of general studies from as early as Weinreich (1954) (see also Trudgill, 1986; Auer, 1998; and Auer et al., 2005, to cite just a few).

Dialect convergence, defined as an increase in similarity between dialects (Hinskens et al., 2005: 1) implies linguistic unification, homogeneization and, sometimes, simplification (Trudgill, 1986). Dialect divergence, in turn, implies a decrease in similarity, diversification and heterogeneization (Hinskens et al., 2005: 1). However antonymic these two concepts may seem, they have proven to be the two sides of the same coin in studies such as Pedersen (1999), who demonstrated that during the 19th century in Copenhagen and Stockholm, there was both a convergence of stylistically marked differences between urban dialect and the spoken standard and a divergence of socially marked differences between both systems, happening simultaneously (as cited by Hinskens et al., 2005: 1). Among the many factors that may condition the evolution of a linguistic variety along these two paths we find language contact. Thus, the effect of language contact has been usually associated with dialect convergence, in that contact varieties tend to become more similar than dissimilar through time. However, the relationship between dialect convergence and contact-induced change is not always straightforward, and the effects of contact can vary depending on a number of factors,

including the type and intensity of contact, the social context in which it occurs, and the attitudes of the speakers involved.

In this scenario, the fact that English has become a global language with a large number of fluent speakers across the world (see Crystal, 2008: 422-423; 2010: 371; 2012: 6) makes it the perfect candidate for the analysis of dialect convergence or divergence. On the one hand, English has been considered a "killer language" (Eckert et al., 2004), a "Tyrannosaurus rex" (Swales, 1997) that destroys diversity and leads to a homogeneous linguistic landscape world-wide and that has educational repercussions (e.g. Gutiérrez-Estrada & Schecter, 2018). On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence that the dispersal of English has led to a myriad of varieties that differ in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and also pragmatics and discourse (as seen in coinage of the word *Englishes* and the multiplicity of publications in journals such as *World Englishes* or *English World-Wide*). Thus, the phenomenon of English language variation in World Englishes has been examined from various perspectives, including its historical, sociocultural, linguistic, ideological, and educational contexts.

To begin with, the dispersal of English has been associated to different diasporas (Kachru et al., 2006: 2-3), as will be explained in detail in Chapter 4. The first diaspora took place in Wales, Ireland and Scotland, while in the second one, English was transported to settlers' colonies in Australia, North America and New Zealand. The third one occurred in British colonies all around the globe, with a special presence in Asia and Africa. In addition, a fourth diaspora is considered to be taking place in the globalized world, with an overall presence of English all around the planet. In addition to these diasporas (e.g. Kachru, 1992; Kachru & Smith, 2008: 5), the global presence of English was modelled by Kachru (1985) as three concentric circles, namely the inner circle (including territories where English is used as native language), the outer circle (places where English is used as a second language), and the expanding circle (including all territories where English is used as a foreign language). The three or four diasporas just mentioned and Kachru's (1985) Concentric Circles Model depict a multifaceted array of varieties of English, each with their unique background and concerns. This divergence in convergence has been discussed in detail regarding African American Vernacular English, for example, which was first claimed to have converged with other dialects of English since the American Civil War, but has been

proven to diverge from other vernacular varieties (Bailey, 1987; Bailey & Maynor, 1989; Wolfram, 2009). In fact, the most common situation is one in which varieties converge in some linguistic features and diverge in others. For example, Trudgill (1998) shows how varieties many converge morpho-syntactically (e.g. the use of the present perfect) and phonological (e.g. the expansion of rhotic dialects), although they may also diverge at the same levels (as seen in the rise of *them* as a singular pronoun in Jamaican English, or the distinct phonology of Singapore English, with features such as the use of final consonant deletion and the merger of /ɔ/ and /o/).

Another example of how an apparently converging variety may lead to linguistic divergence is found in American English itself. Thus, a variety that was initially considered much more homogeneous than British English (as seen in the coinage of the term 'General American' by Krapp, 1925; as cited by Schneider, 2006: 65) "appears to have transcended the stage of emphasizing homogeneity and proceeded to increasing diversification, both regional and social" (Schneider, 2006: 65). Thus, the alleged cultural "melting pot" is not taking place linguistically, since individual social groups can still be recognized by their ethnolinguistic characteristics (Schneider, 2006: 65). Despite this internal divergence, the term 'Americanization' is used along 'globalization' to refer to a world-wide cultural homogeneization as a result of the global commerce whose linguistic consequences are analysed by Yunich (2006).

Global commerce, in fact, regularizes the frequent interaction of people from different regions, which can lead to the adoption of features from different varieties of English, resulting in the convergence of varieties. That would be the situation behind the emergence of English as a Lingua Franca. However, there are also factors such as regional identity that contribute to linguistic divergence. For this reason, beyond the general patterns described by globalization, the term 'glocalization' was coined in the field of globalization studies in order to refer to the process of adapting global products to meet local needs, resulting in increased marketability (Robertson, 1994; Sharifian, 2016; Leuckert & Rüdiger, 2021: 484). This concept can also be applied to the study of World Englishes, particularly in the context of language teaching, since, although English is an international language learned all over the world, the methods that may work in a setting may not work in another one (Fang, 2018). In this sense, Xu (2013) proposed various conceptualizations of

globalization, including mobility, cultural blending, local functionality, super-diversity, and heterogeneity. Though glocalization can be studied at different linguistic levels, the discourse-pragmatic one seems particularly relevant, because given the importance of English as a means of cross-cultural communication, the areas of pragmatics and discourse may have both practical and theoretical significance, since understanding the variations in World Englishes can aid in reducing (mis)communication in real-world contexts.

Thus, pragmatic markers from historical input varieties may take on new functions in outer circle Englishes to accommodate local needs, while other pragmatic markers may be used to foster convergence between interlocutors with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, computer-mediated communication and other technological advancements have facilitated communication between diaspora members and people in their home countries, further contributing to glocalization and language change. Therefore, we must agree with Leuckert & Rüdiger (2021: 484) when they claim that the study of pragmatic markers in World Englishes, therefore, can benefit from the framework of glocalization.

2. PRAGMATIC MARKERS: FROM LINGUISTIC CINDERELLAS TO BLOSSOMING FIELD OF RESEARCH

The label 'pragmatic marker' (used, for example, by Brinton, 1996) coexists with 'pragmatic particle' (Östman, 1995), 'discourse marker' (e.g. Schiffrin, 1987 and Jucker & Ziv, 1998), and 'discourse particle' (e.g. Hansen, 1998; Aijmer, 2002), as mentioned by Aijmer & Simon-Vandenbergen (2011: 226-227). Though there may be little differences between the terms regarding their particular scope, *pragmatic marker* is "most commonly used as a general or umbrella term covering forms with a wide variety of functions both on the interpersonal and textual levels" (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberger, 2011: 227). Probably more important than the label chosen is the characterization of the items that are included in this class, since pragmatic markers have very little in common from a formal perspective. Within this class, we may find "connectives, modal particles, pragmatic uses of modal adverbs, interjections, routines (*how are you*),

feedback signals, vocatives, disjuncts (*frankly*, *fortunately*), pragmatic uses of conjunctions (*and, but*), approximators (hedges), reformulation markers" (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenbergen, 2011: 227). For this reason, definitions of pragmatic markers tend to be as vague as "the connection between what a speaker is saying and what has already been said or what is going to be said," which helps to make the structure of discourse clear (Swan, 1995: 151). Similarly, for Schiffrin (1987: 31) pragmatic markers are "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (see also Hopper & Traugott, 2003: 129). In Brinton's (1996: 6) view, too, these items have the function of marking "various kinds of boundaries" and they can assist in "turn-taking in oral discourse." For Degand & Evers-Vermeul (2015: 60) the main function of pragmatic markers is "to relate an utterance to the situation of discourse, more specifically to speaker-hearer interaction, speaker attitudes, and/or the organization of texts" (see also Baker, 2017: 222-223). This ability of pragmatic markers to show speakers' attitudes is emphasized in various works. So, for Swan (1995: 151) a pragmatic marker can "indicate what speakers think about what they are saying or what others have said." That is, pragmatic markers can show the speaker's view, attitude or judgement "with respect to the relationship between the chunks of discourse that precede and follow" them (Onodera, 2011: 614; see also Brinton, 1996: 6; Andersen, 2001: 22; Traugott & Dasher, 2003: 152). They can even achieve the goal of obtaining "intimacy between speaker and addressee," as Brinton (1996: 6) remarks.

Their lack of belonging to well established fields such as morphology, syntax of phonology explains why they have sometimes been referred to as *linguistic Cinderellas* (Enkvist, 1972: 95, as cited in Brinton, 1996: 1). In fact, we only have to go back to the the 1960s to find the first studies on pragmatic markers, such as Weydt's *Abtönungspartikel* (1969), as mentioned by Aijmer & Simon-Vandenbergen (2011: 223), which makes them one of the last areas of interest of linguistic variation. Sometimes referred to as part of 'Macrosyntax' (e.g. Gülich, 1970, as cited by Aijmer & Simon-Vandenbergen, 2011: 223), an important motivation for the study of pragmatic markers came from the consideration that they respond to rules other than those belonging to syntax and, after a slow beginning, their study gained momentum in the late 1980s with the publication of Schiffrin's (1987) monograph, followed by Jucker and Ziv

(1998), Lenk (1998), Andersen and Fretheim (2000), Aijmer (2002), to name just a few.

Despite the blossoming nature of this field of research, an accurate formal characterization of pragmatic markers still remains tentative, as seen in the list of formal features identified by Brinton (1996) and summarized by Aijmer & Simon-Vandenbergen (2011: 225):

- Phonological and lexical features:
  a. they are short and phonologically reduced;
  b. they form a separate tone group;
  c. they are marginal forms and hence difficult to place within a traditional word class.
- Syntactic features:
  a. they are restricted to sentence-initial position;
  b. they occur outside the syntactic structure or they are only loosely attached to it;
  c. they are optional.
- Semantic feature:
  a. they have little or no propositional meaning.
- Functional feature:
  a. they are multifunctional, operating on several linguistic levels simultaneously.
- Sociolinguistic and stylistic features:
  a. they are a feature of oral rather than written discourse and are associated with informality;
  b. they appear with high frequency;
  c. they are stylistically stigmatised;
  d. they are gender specific and more typical of women‘s speech. (cf. Hölker 1988; Jucker & Ziv 1998; Östman 1982)

(From: Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberger, 2011: 225)

In addition to these formal features of pragmatic markers, their functions have been considered to belong to the following set (Brinton, 1996: 37-38): (1) discourse initiation and closing; (2) aiding the speaker in acquiring or relinquishing the floor; (3) floor management (e.g. turn-holding); (4) boundary marking (e.g. introduction of a new topic, resumption of a topic after interruption); (5) indication of information status (old or new information); (6) making conversational implicatures explicit; (7)

self- or other-repair; (8) response/reaction to previous discourse, hedging; and (9) creation of intimacy and affect between interlocutors (including politeness and face saving).

Since pragmatic markers occur mainly in interactive contexts, the most common methodological approach to their study consists in analysing corpus data. Thus, pragmatic markers have been studied in (i) corpora based on spoken material such as the *Bergen Corpus of London Teenager language* (COLT) (e.g. Andersen, 2001), the MICASE corpus (*Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English*) and the *Spoken Korean English Corpus* (SPOKE) (e.g. Rüdiger, 2021); (ii) in historical corpora such as *A corpus of English dialogues 1560–1760* (Kytö & Walker, 2006); (iii) parallel corpora that allow for comparative studies between related languages (e.g. for English-Swedish and English-Dutch, see e.g. Aijmer & Simon-Vandenbergen, 2003); and (iv) corpora based on computer mediated communication, such as the *Diachronic Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English* (DECTE) (e.g. Woolford, 2021) and the *Nordic Tweet Stream (NTS) Corpus* (e.g. Tyrkkö et al., 2021).

Nowadays, pragmatic markers are analysed from a broad range of perspectives. Thus, in addition to the contrastive studies mentioned in (iii) above, their strong cultural load has made them especially appealing for researches of translation studies, such as Matamala (2007) who has conducted research on the techniques employed in translating the interjection *oh* in English sitcoms that have been dubbed into Catalan. In addition, scholars interested in the variation between native and non-native communication have also paid close attention to pragmatic markers, such as Gilquin (2008), who has demonstrated that there are variations in the occurrence and pattern of pause fillers (such as *like*, *I mean*, *you know*) between contexts of native and non-native speakers. Likewise, pragmatic markers have been studied extensively from a diachronic perspective (e.g. Traugott, 2016), taking into account their function in spoken discourse (Pichler, 2013), and as a result of language contact situations (e.g. *lah*, an outstanding pragmatic marker in Singapore English, e.g. Wong, 2004).

From this multiplicity of perspectives, some pragmatic markers have received much more attention than others. Thus, for example, *well* holds disputably the first place, followed by *like* (and *be like*), and, at a distance, *you know*, *of course* and *sort of* (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenbergen, 2011: 232). Precisely *sort of* and its related *kind of* are the subject of study of

this monograph with the aim of contributing to understanding their usage in World Englishes.

3. AIMS AND STRUCTURE

The aim of this volume is to provide a syntactic and semantic-pragmatic characterization of the pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of* in four varieties of English. These are: British English (BrE) and American English (AmE), as representative of Kachru's (1985) inner circle, and Singapore English (SingE) and Philippine English (PhilE), two outer circle varieties spoken in Asia and with different matrilects. Singapore was a British colony and the Philippines were an American one, and the varieties of English planted there have been in contact with a multiplicity of indigenous languages. The similarities and differences between the four varieties will allow us to contribute to the dialect divergence – dialect convergence discussion, by taking into account the role played by global phenomena (e.g. Americanization and globalization).

For this purpose, this book can be said to have two distinct parts. The first part reviews previous research conducted on *kind of* and *sort of* in inner circle varieties of English, as follows. Chapter 2 provides a historical description of the processes of change undergone by *kind of* and *sort of* from their nominal status (meaning 'type of') to the pragmatic marker function. The chapter guides the reader throughout the history of English (section 1) and also discusses general processes of language change such as reanalysis, metaphor, grammaticalization and pragmaticalization. Chapter 3 describes the current uses, meanings and pragmatic values of *kind of* and *sort of* in inner circle varieties of English, as found in the literature. This description will allow us to measure the degree to which the outer circle varieties studied in this piece of research make a full use of these expressions.

The second part of the study contains the analysis of the status of pragmatic markers in World Englishes. Thus, Chapter 4 describes the field by focusing on the different models of analysis that try to capture the reality in which English is spoken in all continents (section 1). It also positions SingE and PhilE in the context, but describing the historical socio-linguistic evolution of the status of English in those former colonies

(section 2). This chapter also presents the framework within which pragmatic markers should be studied in outer circle varieties, namely postcolonial pragmatics (section 3) and provides a summary of previous studies on pragmatic markers in SingE and PhilE (section 4). Chapter 5 comprises the largest section of the monograph as it scrutinizes the data obtained from the corpus and draws comparisons between the various varieties. Chapter 6 complements this discussion by examining the potential reasons for the similarities and differences between the varieties, as well as exploring the role of global phenomena, such as Americanization and colloquialization, in the process of dialect convergence and divergence. Finally, Chapter 7 presents a summary of the findings, draws conclusions based on them, and provides an outlook for future research.

CHAPTER 2. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF *KIND OF / SORT OF*: PRAGMATICALIZATION VS GRAMMATICALIZATION

1. ORIGINS

According to the *OED*, the oldest examples of *kind* that are available to us date back to Old English, around the year 888 (thus, it is a Germanic noun that has been in English "since the oldest times," Tabor, 1994: 137). They show *kind* in the function of noun and in the function of adjective, and they appear in the same text, which is associated with two historical figures. It is a translation from Latin into Old English of *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, a work by the sixth-century Roman philosopher Boethius. This translation is attributed to Alfred, King of Wessex, one of the "prominent Anglo-Saxons" in the words by Scragg (1986: 56; see also King, 2009a: 23; Grant et al., 2011: 50).

The first meanings displayed by *kind* (both as a noun and as an adjective) have to do with nature and with a number of properties coming from nature: 'That to which one has a natural right, birthright / natural disposition, nature / a natural quality or characteristic / natural' (cf. *OED*, s.v. *kind*, noun, 2a, 3a, 4a, 6; kind, adjective, 1a). Here is one of these old extant samples of KIND, with a translation into Modern English:

(1) *Hæfdan him* ***gecynde*** *cyningas twegen / Rædgod and Aleric.*
(Irvine & Godden, 2012: 4; c. 888)
'They had two kings by right, Raedgota and Alaric.' (Irvine & Godden, 2012: 5)

Also from King Alfred's translation, the *OED* gives evidence of a slightly more general meaning of *kind*, namely 'a race, or a natural group of animals or plants having a common origin' (cf. *OED*, s.v. *kind*, noun, 10a). Here is a passage from Alfred, containing *gecynd*:

(2) *Ða cwæð ic: Nis nan* ***gecynd*** *þe wið hire scippendes willan winne buton dysig mon, oððe eft þa wiðerweardan englas*. (*OED*, s.v. *kind*, noun, 10a; c. 888)
'Then I said: 'There is no creature who fights against its Creator's will save foolish man or the rebellious angels.'' (Kleist, 2008: 105)

As seen, Kleist (2008: 105) translates *gecynd* as 'creature.' For Irvine & Godden (2012: 263), in turn, there is this other possibility: 'There is no nature that contends against its creator's will except a foolish person or again the rebellious angels.' Both translations are in keeping with the information provided by the *OED* about this more general meaning that *kind* had developed towards the end of the 9th century.

It is important to keep a record of these meanings because the rise of new, more general senses in *kind* would be of the greatest importance in the future formation of the chunk *kind of*, as is argued in subsequent paragraphs of this chapter. As in Traugott (2008b: 28-29), examples (1) and (2) can be regarded as the first big step in the historical evolution of kind towards the modern expression *kind of*.

Regarding *sort*, the birth of the word in the English language is very different: It is a loanword from Old French *sort*, a noun meaning 'the fate or lot of a particular person or persons.' The borrowing of French words was primarily due to the prestige of the French language at the time, rather than a need to fill a gap in the English language. While English already had its own word, *gewyrd*, to express the concept of fate or lot, *sort* was adopted from French because of the prestige associated with the language. The first recorded instance that has come down to us is from a Middle English text, Genesis & Exodus (around 1250):

(3) *Abimalech... sente after abraham... And bi-tagte him his wif a-non, And his yuel* ***sort*** *was ouer-gon.* (*OED*, s.v. *sort*, noun1, 1a; c. 1250)
'Abimalech… sent for Abrahan… And returned him his wife and this evil fate was gone.'

The reader of this example can easily notice the meaning 'evil' in the word preceding *sort*, *yuel* (cf. Mayhew & Skeat, 1888: 266). The phrase thus refers to a person's bad fortune: 'And his evil lot was passed.'

In Middle English *sort* appeared in the language as a verb too. Later, the meaning 'lot' could also be seen in Early Modern English texts, as can be checked in the following fragment from Shakespeare's play Troilus and Cressida (1609):

(4) *No, make a lottry*
And by deuise let blockish Aiax draw
The ***sort*** *to fight with Hector.* (*OED*, s.v. *sort*, noun1, 2a; 1609)

After this initial stage, both *kind* and *sort* developed new meanings, such as 'group / class' in the case of *kind*, and as 'kind, species, variety' in the case of *sort*, as illustrated in the following ME examples:

(5) *A nette sent in to the see, and of alle* ***kynd*** *of fishis gedrynge*. (*OED*, s.v. *kind*, noun, 14b; 1382)
'A net was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish.'
(6) *Al þe folk of þis* ***soort*** *is a world þat shal be dampned*. (*OED*, s.v. *sort*, noun2, 1a; c. 1380)
'All the people of this sort is a world that shall be condemned.'

In addition to these semantic developments, the structure *kind /sort of* + noun phrase was consolidated also in the ME period, as observed in Tabor (1994: 138), Denison (2002) or Traugott (2008a: 228, note 8; 2008b: 28-29). Here is a text from the 16th century, extracted from Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster* (around 1568):

(7) *A... grekish* ***kind of*** *writing*. (*OED*, s.v. *kind*, noun, 14a; c. 1568)

This syntactic tendency was progressively consolidated and was concomitant to the consolidation of the meaning 'class' according to the *OED*. As we know, the structure *kind* / *sort* ('class') + *of* + noun phrase has reached the 21st century. Here is an illustrative example, from Hasty Wedding, a comedy by the English playwright Charles Shadwell (1720):

(8) *I do think him but a* ***sort of*** *a,* ***kind of*** *a, ...* ***sort of*** *a Gentleman*. (*OED*, s.v. *sort*, noun2, 8b; 1720)

This case is especially interesting for the purposes of this section because it shows the similarity that the two structures had acquired by the 18th century. They even appear together in this fragment as synonyms. Besides, in this example the expressions *kind of* and *sort of* display the nuance of approximation that the modern pragmatic markers are able to convey. The man described in example (8), therefore, is not a gentleman, strictly speaking, but something similar to a gentleman. There is an approximation to the meaning that is usually conveyed by *gentleman*.

The reason why the structures *kind of* and *sort of* (meaning 'type of') emerged in the language can be found in Wierzbicka (1996). For her, the concept of 'kind' is "at the heart of the human characterization of the "contents of the world"" (1996: 62). What is more, "the lexicon of every language is full of taxonomic concepts which rely crucially on this concept" (1996: 62), so much so that Wierzbicka regards the concept of 'kind' as a "lexical universal" (1996: 63) and as a "universal semantic primitive" (1996: 64). Consequently, as English is no exception to this general tendency, there are cases like the noun *rose*, which is 'a *kind of* flower,' as she remarks (1996: 62). On these grounds, it is just natural that the language should have given birth to sentences showing the pattern below:

(9) *There are three kinds of* [noun]. (Wierzbicka 1996: 63)

The rise of *kind of* and *sort of* with this meaning reflects the linguistic concept of hyponymy, too. This term (from Greek *hypó* 'under' + *ónyma* 'name') refers to a semantic relation of subordination between two concepts (cf. Bussmann, 1996: 213) such as the one of *rose* and *flower* discussed above. For Crystal (2010: 109), likewise, hyponymy depicts a relationship of inclusion "whereby we can say that 'an X is a *kind of* Y.'" The use of the expression "*kind of*" in Crystal's explanation shows the intimate connection, in short, between the expressions under scrutiny and the semantic term just described. The concept of hyponymy fades away, however, once we find examples such as (10), in which *kind of* is no longer followed by a noun phrase, but by a verb:

(10) *I* ***kind of*** *love you, Sal – I vow*. (*OED*, s.v. *kind*, noun, 14d; 1804)

In addition, this example does not display the noun *kind* referring to a class of thing but shows *kind of* in a use that is similar to that of an adverb, with the meaning 'somewhat.' This example is thus recorded as the first case of adverbial *kind of* by Tabor (1994: 138) and Tabor et al. (2011). Similarly, the *OED* indicates that *kind of* is used adverbially here, with the meaning 'in a way / to some extent' (cf. *OED*, s.v. *kind*, noun, 14d).

This fragment is taken from the American writer Thomas Green Fessenden (1771-1837), specifically from "The Country Lovers," a poem included in his Original Poems. In the context of the example, a young man (Jonathan) approaches a young woman (Sal) to tell her that he loves her, but he is shy and even clumsy according to the context: He is described as a dunce (cf. Fessenden, 1806: 80). The text then says that he finally "muster'd courage to come up to her and show her his feelings" (1806: 80) by uttering the words that are reproduced in example (10) above (cf. Fessenden, 1806: 81).

Here, the expression *kind of* hedges Jonathan's message in order to avoid sounding too abrupt or direct in front of the young woman. In this sense, as can be seen in the context of the country lovers poem, the semantics of *kind of* had gained in subjectivity a great deal by the beginning of the 19th century in comparison with the first uses of the noun *kind* at the time of King Alfred (cf. also Traugott, 1995a: 44-45). By taking this step, *kind of* therefore became another resource available to language users to express subjectivity (cf. Andersen, 2001: 67; Traugott & Dasher, 2003: 19-24, 95-96).

In her account of the history of adverbial *kind of*, Traugott (2008b: 28-29) also coincides in this view that the first recorded instance of such an adverbial use in the *OED* is the example from 1804 quoted above. In her work, this example represents step IV in this historical process (2008b: 28-29), namely: *Gecynde* ('nature,' Old English period, step I) > *kind* ('member of a class,' early 16th century, step II) > *kind of* (quantifier use, early 18th century, step III).

The sequence *kind of* as a hedging device begins to offer written manifestations in the language from the beginning of the 19th century, when it began to be used in front of a verb (cf. example (10) above). Yet, such use of the current pragmatic marker *kind of* can also take other components after it, not only a verb. Thus, for example, the first plausible case that the *OED* records for adverbial *kind of* plus a noun phrase comes

slightly later, from the work of Charles Dickens. Consider the following extract, from David Copperfield:

(11) *'Theer's been **kiender** a blessing fell upon us', said Mr. Peggotty*. (*OED*, s.v. *kind*, noun, 14d; 1850)

Here, the element under study appears under the form *kiender*, but this form can be considered as characteristic of *kind of* in hedging function, as well. The key factor for such a consideration is that *kind of* modifies the noun phrase a blessing with the meaning 'somewhat.' Additionally, other forms that the *OED* records are *kind a'*, *kind o'*, *kinder* and *kin' o'* (cf. *OED*, s.v. *kind*, noun, 14d).

As for *sort of*, example (12) next contains the first plausible case that has been recorded of this expression with an adverbial function. It is this fragment, from Late Modern English:

(12) *Its a fine Ewnin but its **a sort a** caad.* (*OED*, s.v. *sort*, noun2, 8c; 1790)

This passage is taken from a text by the writer Ann Wheeler (1735-1804): *The Westmorland Dialect, in Three Familiar Dialogues*. A present-day paraphrase is offered by Tabor (1994: 177), as *It's a fine evening but it's sort of cold*, in which the article *a* from (12) is absent. The presence of such article, however, is not reduced to particular non-standard dialects, as seen in (13) below, which exhibits the adjective *bewildered* after *sort of*, which is indicative of adverbial status in *sort of* (cf. the reasons given for example (12) above):

(13) *One is **a sort of** bewildered in attempting to discover what it really is which constitutes the obligation*. (*OED*, s.v. *sort*, noun2, 8c; 1858)

It is also worth recording an early case from the *OED* where *sort of* occurs between an auxiliary verb (*had*) and the past participle of a main verb (*killed*). It contains the form *sorter*, which, as mentioned before, at times behaves as a variant of *sort of* (cf. *kiender* above):

(14) *The rosewood cradle... had, in Stumpy's way of putting it, '**sorter** killed the rest of the furniture.'* (*OED*, s.v. *sort*, noun2, 8c; 1870)

By contrast, the first sample of *sort of* (with an adverbial function) + noun phrase that the dictionary offers is much later, from 1976 (Present-Day English). It is taken from an American newspaper, the National Observer:

(15) *He calls it the 'Icarus Human-Powered Aircraft.' 'It's **sort of** a cumbersome name.'* (*OED*, s.v. *sort*, noun2, 8c; 1976)

Summing up, the historical development of *kind of* and *sort of* towards expressions with adverbial status is very similar: Both constructions have developed along the same lines in the course of history both in terms of syntax and pragmatics-semantics. Keizer (2007: 182) thus affirms that "around 1800 both these nouns [i.e. *kind* and *sort*] developed adverbial uses" and Traugott (2008b: 28-29) even calls them "congeners." Tabor, for his part, considers that "it seems likely that the two forms are essentially one item syntactically with two different phonological instantiations" (1994: 140). However, given the historical differences outlined above, it might be more accurate to say that, even if *kind of* and *sort of* fulfil a similar syntactic function (cf. Aijmer, 1984: 118) and occur in the same place in a sentence to play a similar semantic and syntactic role (cf. Aijmer, 1984: 118), they are not one single item. What *kind of* and *sort of* clearly share, however, is their evolution from nouns to adverbs to pragmatic markers (much along the lines identified by Brinton, 2010: 299):

> *From predicate adverb to sentential adverb to discourse marker*
> In this development, a predicate adverb (e.g. a manner adverb), which has narrow syntactic scope and evaluates the predicated event, is dislocated from clause-internal position to the position typical for wide-scope sentential adverbs (typically sentence-initial position). Here it comes to evaluate the content of the entire proposition. Over time, it may acquire new pragmatic functions, in the process assuming scope over larger chunks of discourse. When these functions become conventionalized, it has acquired discourse-marker status. (Brinton, 2010: 2999)

This path has been identified in the development of *indeed*, *in fact*, and *besides*, and also of *only*, which undergoes a change in meaning from the numerical sense of 'one' to the function of an adjective or adverb

meaning 'solely, uniquely,' before shifting to a focusing adverb with an exclusive connotation and, finally, a conjunction with discourse-marking properties that serve an adversative function (Brinton, 1998). The following reviews the development of *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers from the adverbial functions we have just seen.

2. REANALYSIS, METAPHOR, GRAMMATICALIZATION AND PRAGMATICALIZATION OF *KIND OF* AND *SORT OF*

The evolution of *kind of* and *sort of* from regular noun phrases meaning 'type of' to adverbs to pragmatic markers with a hedging function has been explained in terms of well known processes of language change, such as reanalysis, metaphor, grammaticalization and pragmaticalization. This section pays attention to all these viewpoints.

Reanalysis has been identified as a crucial phenomenon in the development of the pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of* (e.g. Aijmer, 2002: 181; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 567, 621). This common kind of morphological and syntactic change in the world's languages is considered as one of the primary three phenomena, alongside extension and syntactic borrowing (Campbell, 2013: 273). Reanalysis can be defined as "the historical process by which a well-formed surface string comes to be interpreted as having a different structure from formerly" (Trask, 1992: 228). Similarly, for Campbell (2013: 273) reanalysis "changes the underlying structure of a syntactic construction, but does not modify surface manifestation."

Thus, the strings *kind of* and *sort of* were formerly used as noun + preposition strings meaning 'type of,' but later they were understood as single blocks modifying the following elements. They were then reanalysed as a single chunk with a hedging function, that is, they were idiomatized (according to Bussmann (1996: 217), idiomatization is a type of semantic change whereby a construction acquires a meaning that no longer derives from the meaning of each of its components). That change in the deep structure of the expressions did not bring about a modification in the outer appearance of the words involved, if we leave aside the eventual development of reduced forms such as *kinda* or *sorta*, which are informal variants of the elements under study. The new analysis took

place before the 19th century according to Tabor (1994: 193). Example (16) illustrates the shift:

(16) *a **kind of** love > I **kind of** love you*

Traugott (2008a: 229) also claims that *kind of* and *sort of* have undergone reanalysis. She draws attention to the occurrence of these expressions in front of noun phrases and, for her, "in this kind of context NP2 came to be reanalyzed as the head and *a sort of* became a degree modifier conveying the speaker's assessment that the entity referred to is not an adequate or prototypical exemplar of NP2 [...], or that NP2 is not an exactly approximate expression" (Traugott, 2008a: 229). Margerie (2010) also notes that the appearance of *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers may be due to the fact that both these sequences and their antecedents (*kind of* and *sort of* as noun + preposition) can evoke the idea of approximation to a given idea (cf. Margerie, 2010: 317-318). Let us consider the following example:

(17) *It's a **kind of** reddish-brown colour*. (Margerie, 2010: 318, 332)

This fragment exhibits *kind of* as noun + preposition, but the idea of approximation that this sequence contains provides a link between this structure and *kind of* as a pragmatic marker, for this modern expression is also able to convey approximation.

Besides, Traugott (2008b: 28) stresses that speakers could have interpreted *kind of* / *sort of* + noun phrase structures as having quantificational properties, so these structures would then be taken as quantifier constructions. Eventually, these fragments could have given rise to adverbial degree modifiers "that scale their heads up or down on a scale of closeness to a prototype" (2008b: 28). These observations are in keeping with the data put forth so far, as well.

The reanalysis of *kind of* and *sort of* has involved a process of boundary loss (cf. a similar terminology in Tabor, 1994: 199): In the past, there was a boundary separating the nouns *kind* and *sort* from the preposition *of*. Then, in the emergence of the hedging expressions around 1800, *kind of* and *sort of* started to act as blocks in terms of syntax and semantics: These strings began to behave as fixed phrases meaning 'somewhat.' The phenomenon of boundary loss in *kind of* / *sort of* is attested at the

levels of phonology, orthography and morphology. As regards phonology, boundary loss can be identified in the rise of the forms /ˈkaɪndə/ and /ˈsɔːtə/. In orthography, there are the compact manifestations *kinda* and *sorta*. All of these forms are indicative enough of the new parsing of elements. In morphology, the old morpheme boundary existing between *kind* / *sort* and *of* is clearly lost in *kinda* and *sorta*. The boundaries that formerly separated the morphemes disappear, so that there are two new expressions in the repertoire of the English vocabulary, two new morphemes acting as pragmatic markers today. Boundary loss is, in fact, a very common type of change in languages (cf. Campbell, 2013: 250) and finds a reflection in the cases under scrutiny here, just as in the change from Old English *oncnawan* (*on* 'on' + *cnawan* 'to recognize') to the modern word *acknowledge* (cf. Campbell, 2013: 250).

It must also be remarked here that it was when the strings *kind of* and *sort of* began to be used with elements other than noun phrases (adjectives, adverbs, verbs, etc.) that the first hedging function arose (cf. a similar argument in Tabor, 1994: 139 and Traugott, 2008a: 229). In that sense, Tabor (1994: 178) claims that the structure *a kind of* / *a sort of* + adjective is a blend of the uses of *kind* and *sort* as nouns and the modern pragmatic markers. On the one hand, in those sequences there is a determiner (i.e. *a*) that seems to indicate that the following element (i.e. *kind* or *sort*) is a noun. On the other hand, there is an adjective after *kind of* and *sort of*, which is indicative of the new function of these elements. Consequently, as has just been argued, those hybrid structures that Tabor mentions can already be taken as incipient examples of the modern expressions *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers. Therefore, such hybrid examples of *a kind of* / *a sort of* + adjective (as in (18), an early example) must have made a significant contribution in the development of modern *kind of* and *sort of*. They must also be connected with the bridging context that is explored in Heine (2002: 86), i.e. "a specific context giving rise to an inference in favour of a new meaning." This is a characteristic feature of grammaticalization, which will be discussed below.

(18) *But in such questions as the present, a hundred contradictory views may preserve a* ***kind of*** *imperfect analogy* (from David Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, 1743) [example from Tabor, 1994: 141]

Alongside reanalysis, another process of language change that is illustrated in the evolution of *kind of* and *sort of* is that of metaphor (cf. Aijmer, 1984: 124; Holmes, 1988: 97; Brown & Levinson, 1987: 117; Kay, 1997: 153). In Brown and Levinson's (1978: 122) words, "[such] expressions… may mark the word that they modify as being a metaphor of some sort, leaving it up to the addressee to figure out how to interpret it." That is, sometimes messages containing *kind of* and *sort of* should not be interpreted literally but as metaphors (cf. Aijmer, 1984: 124).

As Campbell (2013: 224) notes, the word *metaphor* comes from Greek *metaphorā*, which means 'transference.' He argues that the definitions of metaphor vary considerably from one author to another, but for him this process "involves understanding or experiencing one *kind of* thing in terms of another *kind of* thing thought somehow to be similar in some way; that is, A is like B" (2013: 224). He points out that metaphor is generally regarded as a major factor in semantic change (2013: 224), and Bussmann (1996: 304) similarly comments on the importance of metaphor in the appearance of new lexical formations in the histories of languages (cf. also Traugott & Dasher, 2003: 27). Campbell adds that metaphor in semantic change "involves extensions in the meaning of a word that suggest a semantic similarity or connection between the new sense and the original one" (2013: 224). So, in order to check whether *kind of* and *sort of* have undergone metaphorical change, examples (20) and (19) will be established here as tokens of the old and the new meaning of the sequences *kind of* and *sort of*, respectively:

(19) *I* ***kind of*** *love you, Sal – I vow.* (*OED*, s.v. *kind*, noun, 14d; 1804)
(20) *a* ***kind of*** *love*

Taking into account the situations described in examples (19) and (20), we can imagine that those two situations could have crossed speakers' minds as "similar in some way" (in Campbell's words) In addition, if we compare examples like (19) with examples like (20), we can establish a "semantic similarity." Finally, there is a clear "connection between the new sense and the original one" (Campbell, 2013: 224). To sum up, then, there seem to be clear indications that the process of semantic change undergone by *kind of* and *sort of* meets the criteria proposed by Campbell (2013) to identify metaphorical change in languages.

The semantic change undergone by *kind of* and *sort of* can also be linked with a particular line of research in the field of semantic studies. Thus, some studies (cf. Traugott, 1989: 34-35; Hopper & Traugott, 2003: 129; Traugott & Dasher, 2003: 95) have shown how meanings tend to become increasingly based on the speaker's subjective belief state or attitude towards the proposition. This is, indeed, the case of the two elements here because the adverbial uses of *kind of* and *sort of* are deeply imbued with subjectivity. Consider the following example:

(21) ***Kinds of*** *bread*.

This utterance can appear on a poster showing different types of bread: White bread, wheat bread, whole grain bread, rye bread, etc. So it is clear that the sequence *kinds of* (noun + preposition) is firmly rooted to the physical world in this context. By contrast, the following sentence shows the pragmatic marker *kind of* functioning as a modifier of the adjective *weird*, with the more abstract meaning 'somewhat,' in a clearly subjective message of a speaker:

(22) *It's* ***kind of*** *weird.*

In this example (from the script of the film *It's Kind of a Funny Story*) a male character clearly gives his personal opinion on something. Therefore, the transition towards more subjectivity is attested in the evolution of the expressions under study.

The following example, reported by Kay (1997: 153), also supports the previous considerations. It is an extract from a newspaper (*The San Francisco Chronicle*) from September 10, 1979. It was entitled "Disappointing Program from Ailing Pianist" and was written by Heuwell Turcuit:

(23) *With a number of disappointing program changes, pianist-composer B____'s Friday recital* ***sort of*** *imploded. The form of the event collapsed with those shifts.* (cf. Kay, 1997: 153, note 7)

As Kay indicates, recitals cannot literally implode because they are not physical objects. He adds that the author of the newspaper article actually wanted to refer to "metaphorical collapse, with *sort of* stuck

in as a metalinguistic apology for the fancy metaphor" (1997: 153). In other words, Kay's example again illustrates metaphor in today's use of the elements under study. And just as he took note of this case of metaphorical collapse in the piece of news from *The San Francisco Chronicle*, it is suitable now to mention the following case from Huddleston & Pullum (2002):

(24) *It **sort of** collapsed.* (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 567)

This sentence can be interpreted as 'In a way, it collapsed.' It contains a case of adverbial *sort of* + verb where there is a metaphor and a metalinguistic comment again.

Consider now the following case:

(25) *She was lookin **kinda** dumb with her finger and her thumb in the shape of an "L" on her forehead*. (Brems, 2011: 270)

In comparison with *kind of* as a noun + preposition sequence meaning 'type of,' the occurrence of *kinda* here (as a modifier of an adjective) shows "increased subjectification" (i.e. increased development of subjective meaning) according to Brems (2011: 270). The strong subjective tone of example (25) does not have an equivalent in sequences such as *a kind of love* (cf. also Margerie, 2010: 342). When *kind of* and *sort of* are able to carry such a subjective component, Aijmer (2002: 180) identifies a development of affective meaning, too. So these are also characteristic traits of the semantic behaviour of *kind of* and *sort of* today, along with the above-mentioned dimension of metaphorical use.

According to Traugott & Dasher (2003: 29), language items that have undergone a process of metaphorization have experimented a gain in pragmatic meaning, as well. In fact, the pragmaticalization of *kind of* and *sort of* will be discussed below, in comparison with grammaticalization.

The syntactic reanalysis undergone by these expressions, alongside their metaphorical uses and their increasing subjectivity, is also accompanied by changes at the morphophonological level. Thus, the sequences *kind of* and *sort of*, by default pronounced in RP as in (26) and (27) below, are typically unstressed when they function as pragmatic markers

and are, therefore, pronounced in the same dialect as the reduced forms in (28) and (29) – sometimes spelled *kinda* (*kinder*) and *sorta* (*sorter*):

(26) /ˈkaɪnd əv/
(27) /ˈsɔːt əv/
(28) /ˈkaɪndə/
(29) /ˈsɔːtə/

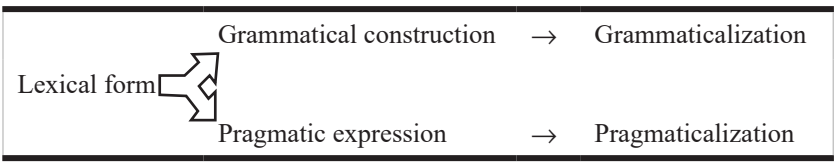
This phonological reduction is the same observed for semi-modals such as *gonna, gotta, wanna* and *hafta* (Krug, 2000) and reflects both the unstressed character of these forms and, also, their morphosyntactic evolution to grammaticalized items. For these reasons, it comes as no surprise that *kind of* and *sort of* have been considered to have undergone grammaticalization and also pragmaticalization. The following paragraphs discuss these two phenomena.

By means of grammaticalization "lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions" (Hopper & Traugott, 2003: 18). A case in point is the evolution of the verb *will*: From a main verb meaning 'want' to the status of a modal auxiliary verb (as shown, for example, in Campbell, 2013: 282). Regarding pragmaticalization, this is a phenomenon whereby "a lexico-grammatical sequence or word form, in a given context, loses its propositional meaning in favour of an essentially metacommunicative, discourse-interactional meaning and/or (an already pragmatic element) continues to develop further pragmatic functions or forms" (Claridge & Arnovick, 2010: 187). An example is the development of the pragmatic marker *you know* (cf. Aijmer, 1997: 2).

Aijmer (1997), indeed, establishes a distinction between grammaticalization and pragmaticalization (although she also finds similarities between the two processes, as seen in Aijmer, 1997: 6, and in more recent works she refers to the grammaticalization of discourse markers, such as Aijmer, 2002; Wichmann et al., 2010). According to her, grammaticalization explains the "derivation of grammatical forms and constructions" like mood, aspect or tense, whereas pragmaticalization focuses on items that more specifically involve "a speaker's attitude to the hearer" (Aijmer, 1997: 2). One of the reasons that Aijmer gives to take this stance is that pragmatic elements "tend to be optional in the sentence," while

grammaticalized forms are an obligatory part of the "grammatical core" of a language (1997: 3), e.g. tense. In Diewald's (2011a: 456; 2011b: 373, 384) opinion, such an understanding of pragmaticalization assumes that the items that follow its steps develop towards an area that is not part of grammar. Figure 1 below (adapted from Aijmer, 1997: 2) provides a summary of these considerations (cf. also Brinton, 2007: 63):

Figure 1: Grammaticalization vs. Pragmaticalization
(adapted from Aijmer 1997: 2)



On the other hand, for some scholars such as Diewald (2011a: 451, 458; 2011b: 365, 384) or Wischer (2000: 357) pragmaticalization should be regarded as a subclass of grammaticalization (see also López-Couso & Seoane, 2017: 288, note 4). Thus, according to Diewald (2011a: 451) many features of the grammar of languages are rooted in pragmatics. She states, for example, that subjectification (or the development of subjective meaning) is a process that has been associated with grammaticalization in studies on the topic but this emergence of speaker-based meanings "has a very close natural connection to pragmatics" (cf. Diewald, 2011a: 452). Furthermore, she claims that pragmatic meaning "is generally not regarded to be part of grammar" (2011a: 455) but "grammatical signs always contain an indexical relation" and this indexical relation, "no matter in which modified and abstracted version it may appear, is finally based on a deictic relation and is thus deeply entrenched into pragmatics" (2011a: 461).

Diewald (2011a: 454) also observes that the notion of pragmaticalization was introduced in order to "tackle problems arising in the diachronic development of discourse markers" because of the particular features of these items (cf. also López-Couso & Seoane, 2017: 286). As a matter of fact, the development of pragmatic markers is different from usual cases of grammaticalization in several aspects, according to López-Couso & Seoane (2017). For example, pragmatic markers "do

not constitute a formal grammatical class and do not become part of a paradigm" (López-Couso & Seoane, 2017: 286). Aside from this, pragmatic markers are optional, so the parameter of obligatorification, which is common in grammaticalization, is not attested in them. These markers are also "loosely connected with the sentence" and often constitute a separate intonation unit, and consequently there is no syntactic fixation. In addition, they usually have scope "beyond the clause level," so there is no scope reduction as in grammaticalization.

However, if we adopt a broad conception of grammar that encompasses pragmatic functions, we can regard the notion of pragmaticalization as dispensable to explain the evolution of language items and use the term grammaticalization instead (cf. Diewald, 2011b: 384). In this view, pragmatic markers would be subsumed within the study of grammaticalization (cf. a similar stance in Brinton, 1996: 50; 2007: 64; see also Degand & Evers-Vermeul, 2015: 74-75).

In theory, the specific cases of *kind of* and *sort of* could be ascribed to any of the two processes: As already seen, in the development of the two pragmatic markers from *kind of* and *sort of* as noun + preposition, (a) the language has incorporated two new devices with the grammatical function modifier (plausible grammaticalization); (b) the language has acquired two new devices with key roles in the area of pragmatics (plausible pragmaticalization). Yet, we have just observed that the grammar of the English language can be understood in a broad sense that encompasses pragmatic functions, as in Brinton (1996, 2007), Diewald (2011a, 2011b) and Degand & Evers-Vermeul (2015) and, as has been shown so far in this volume, an analysis of *kind of* and *sort of* in the field of pragmatics needs to be added to the description of their traits in syntax, morphology, semantics and phonology in order to obtain a complete description of their behaviour (why they are chosen, how they work in practice, etc.). On these grounds, the two markers could be regarded as illustrative tokens of grammaticalization if they fulfilled its characteristic features.

For this purpose, it is useful to study the application of the set of traits displayed in Table 1, from Lehmann (1985: 307; cf. also Wischer, 2000: 356), because they show six parameters and processes of change that usually take place in the grammaticalization of language signs, so they can be used to determine the degree of grammaticalization that a language item has undergone. Other scholars have different viewpoints on

grammaticalization and use other terminology, such desemanticization, decategorialization, cliticization and erosion (see Heine, 1993: 54-58).

Table 1: Lehmann's (1985) parameters of grammaticalization.

Parameter	**Process**	**Explanation**
Integrity	Attrition	The gradual loss of semantic and phonological substance.
Paradigmaticity	Paradigmaticization	The increasing integration of a syntactic element into a morphological paradigm.
Paradigmatic variability	Obligatorification	The choice of the linguistic item becomes rule-governed.
Scope	Condensation	The shrinking of scope.
Bondedness	Coalescence	Once a syntactic unit has become morphological, it gains in bondedness and may even fuse with the constituent it governs.
Syntagmatic variability	Fixation	The item loses its syntagmatic variability and becomes a slot filler.

The application of these six parameters and processes to the specific cases of *kind of* and *sort of* can be summarized as follows: Firstly, as regards integrity and attrition, these observations can be made. From the meaning 'type of' to the sense 'somewhat' there has been a significant change. Later, as pragmatic markers, *kind of* and *sort of* have experimented semantic bleaching, in sentences where the two expressions hardly alter the meaning of the item that follows them but rather are indications that they are inserted in discourse to give it a component of vagueness. This state of affairs is visible in, for instance, "and I *sort of* opened the door, and looked out, and I *sort of* saw Richard" (Denison, 2002: 4). The expressions *kind of* and *sort of* can even become mere fillers in some cases. Consequently, taking all these facts into account, there certainly has been a loss of semantic substance. In addition, the process of attrition has to do with the loss of phonological substance. *Kind of* and *sort of* do not necessarily manifest themselves under phonologically reduced forms, as in /ˈkaɪnd əv/ and /ˈsɔːt əv/ (in RP), but the reduced forms /ˈkaɪndə/

and /ˈsɔːtə/ are available and attested. Overall, then, the phenomenon of attrition is perceived in the evolution of *kind of* and *sort of*.

If we pay attention to the second parameter and process in Table 1, paradigmaticity and paradigmaticization, the following points can be raised: *kind of* and *sort of* can be labelled as pragmatic markers due to pragmatic criteria, i.e. due to the functions that they perform in discourse. *Kind of* and *sort of* have partly undergone the process of paradigmaticization because, although the two pragmatic markers do not form part of a morphological paradigm, the words *kind* and *sort* no longer function as nouns when they develop the role of pragmatic markers in the strings *kind of* and *sort of*: In this function they have fitted into a new paradigm, i.e. the set of pragmatic markers, which is defined according to the crucial pragmatic functions that its members develop in language use. Thus, in their operation as pragmatic markers, the words *kind* and *sort* do not exhibit the morphological characteristics that they do when working as nouns. This includes, for example, the possibility of taking a plural ending, as can be checked in the following ungrammatical sentence:

(30) **They are **kinds of** happy.*

Turning now to the third parameter and process in Table 1, paradigmatic variability and obligatorification, *kind of* and *sort of* are not obligatory in English sentences: A speaker can say "I saw his point" but they can also utter "I *sort of* saw his point," where *sort of* is used to hedge the verb following it. From this point of view, the two pragmatic markers would not meet this criterion.

Nonetheless, the communicative intentions of the latter two sentences are different, so utterances such as "I *sort of* saw his point" contain a hedging function that speakers often like resorting to. For such purposes, then, *kind of* and *sort of* are ideal choices for speakers. As Lehmann (1985: 307) specifies, in weak cases of grammaticalization we can identify the "free choice of items according to communicative intentions," so from this perspective we can argue that *kind of* and *sort of* partly meet the criterion of obligatorification, i.e. they show weak grammaticalization as far as this process is concerned.[1]

[1] It must noted, however, that obligatorification is not a decisive process for some authors, as aptly noted by an anonymous reviewer. Thus, for example, Traugott (1995b)

The fourth parameter and process highlighted in Table 1, scope and condensation, can be accounted for as follows: *kind of* and *sort of* have a narrow scope when they modify the item that follows them. This is the case of the sentence "I *sort of* saw his point," where the meaning of *saw* is qualified by *sort of*. Yet, *kind of* and *sort of* can also acquire a wide scope, when they modify a whole clause or sentence. In the sentence "It's a telescope, *sort of*", the pragmatic marker modifies the clause preceding it, i.e. "It's a telescope." Consequently, these two different situations provide evidence that the scope of *kind of* / *sort of* has not been reduced: Since the time when *kind of* and *sort of* began to act as noun + preposition (meaning 'type of') to their uses as pragmatic markers, their scope has widened and now these markers can modify various words, phrases and clauses (e.g. adjectives, verbs, noun phrases, prepositional phrases, reason clauses, *wh*-interrogative clauses, etc.). So the process of condensation is not illustrated in the development of the two markers.

If we turn our attention to the fifth parameter and process in Table 1, bondedness and coalescence, we can observe that *kind of* and *sort of* do not fuse with the element that they modify in their current use as pragmatic markers. However, in the development of the markers the nouns *kind* and *sort* did fuse with part of the prepositional phrase following them, i.e. they fused with the preposition *of* to eventually form the markers. Thus, the two previously independent items (*kind* / *sort* on the one hand and *of* on the other) fused in one single unit in terms of syntactic behaviour. As a matter of fact, the emergence of the reduced forms *kinda* and *sorta* provides consistent evidence of the strength that *kind* / *sort* and of have come to acquire. Therefore, we can conclude that the process of coalescence is attested in the evolution of the two pragmatic markers, at least partially.

Finally, regarding syntagmatic variability and fixation, *kind of* and *sort of* are more mobile in sentences than other language items that have undergone strong grammaticalization and now occupy a fixed slot

proposes a series of criteria for the grammaticalization of pragmatic markers (discourse markers in her terminology) which resemble Lehmann's (2002) well-known parameters of grammaticalization. These are categorialization, bounding within the phrase, phonological reduction, generalization of meaning, increase in pragmatic function and subjectification. Obligatorification, however, is not overtly considered by Traugott (1995b).

(Lehmann, 1985: 307). In this sense, then, the markers are not illustrative tokens of the sixth parameter and process shown in Table 1.

As a summary of the preceding paragraphs, we can conclude that *kind of* and *sort of* only meet one of Lehmann's (1985) characteristic parameters of grammaticalization clearly, i.e. integrity. Two of these characteristics are not met: Scope and syntagmatic variability. Then, there are three parameters that have been just partly active in the two markers, namely paradigmaticity, paradigmatic variability and bondedness. Consequently, from this specific perspective *kind of* and *sort of* do not behave as protypical cases of grammaticalization.

Nevertheless, in Wischer's (2000: 356) view the processes in Table 1 correspond to subtype I of grammaticalization, which can be seen at work in the "transformation of free syntactic units into highly constrained grammatical morphemes," but not in the evolution of pragmatic markers. According to Wischer (2000: 356), the development of these markers illustrates another class of grammaticalization, namely subtype II, which "operates on the textual or discourse level" (2000: 356). Wischer regards pragmaticalization as a subclass of grammaticalization and argues that both of them have in common the fact that language items experiment a process of recategorization, "changing over from a more open categorial system to a closer one" (2000: 357). Furthermore, she claims that subtype II of grammaticalization, i.e. grammaticalization at the discourse level, deals with lexical items that enter "a relatively close categorial system of textual or discourse markers via further subjectification and extension of scope" (2000: 357). She adds that such a categorial change "is accompanied by a process of phonetic reduction" (2000: 357). Eventually, then, the items that illustrate this *kind of* grammaticalization undergo changes not only at the level of syntax but also in the areas of morphology, semantics, phonology and discourse (2000: 357).

Taking into account the conclusions that have been drawn from the application of the parameters of grammaticalization set forth in Table 1, Wischer's subtype II of grammaticalization is the framework where the particular cases of *kind of* and *sort of* best adjust. The following lines show some specific links existing between the development of the two markers and Wischer's distinctive features for subtype II of grammaticalization.

Firstly, let us consider subjectification: This is a semantic-pragmatic process "involving a shift in meaning from the objective description of an external situation to the expression of the speaker's internal view,

belief, or attitude towards the proposition" (López-Couso & Seoane, 2017: 285). This process normally takes place in grammaticalization, as López-Couso & Seoane (2017: 285) affirm, and it is exactly the case of the two pragmatic markers under examination: We have already seen that these two expressions have developed highly subjective uses in their evolution from noun + preposition sequences to their present status as pragmatic markers, so in this sense they are in keeping with other attested cases of subtype II of grammaticalization in the language. If we consider that subjectification can be studied from a perspective that takes into account pragmatic values in words and expressions, as in Diewald (2011a: 452), the evolution of *kind of* and *sort of* will fit in the framework of grammaticalization studies.

Traugott (2008a: 226-230, 234-235, 237; 2008b: 27-29) and Margerie (2010) also identify the evolution of *kind of* and *sort of* as cases of grammaticalization. Margerie lays special emphasis on the role played by subjectification in this process, thus: "The various stages of the grammaticalization of *kind of* illustrate a gradual move towards greater subjectivity and intersubjectivity" (2010: 315). She, like Traugott (2010: 30), understands the term *subjectivity* as the "relationship to the speaker and the speaker's beliefs and attitudes" and intersubjectivity as the "relationship to the addressee and addressee's face," and claims that both processes are at work in the operation of *kind of*. Intersubjectivity can be seen, for example, in moments when speakers use this pragmatic marker tentatively, with hesitations, when they think about the suitable words to use after the marker (Margerie, 2010: 320). As for the connection between *kind of* / *sort of* and subjectivity, the link has repeatedly been shown in the course of this book.

Regarding the phenomena of extension of scope and phonological reduction, these two features are also attested in the cases of *kind of* and *sort of*. In this sense the two pragmatic markers share the profile of other language items that have experimented subtype II of grammaticalization too, as Wischer (2000: 357) remarks.

Given these considerations, the case of *kind of* and *sort of* can be linked with Andersen's (2001) examination of other pragmatic markers. For him the theory of grammaticalization is "fully equipped to account for the historical development of pragmatic markers" (Andersen, 2001: 29). He claims that grammaticalization can be conceived as a "linguistic development process whereby linguistic units are recruited into grammar,"

as is the case here. Andersen (2001: 34) further states that it is frequent now to "view grammaticalization from a discourse perspective, as a development of syntactic and morphological structures through a gradual fixing of discourse functions." This approach adopts a wide conception of grammar that focuses on communicative aspects and pragmatic factors, and this allows to classify the particular cases of *kind of* and *sort of* under the heading of grammaticalization without ignoring the important traits that they now exhibit in the field of pragmatics.[2]

In respect of the grammaticalization vs. lexicalization distinction, *kind of* and *sort of* are posited as instances of the latter in Brinton & Traugott (2005: 151), and the change from *sort of* to *sorta* is seen as an instance that the two processes "may intersect" in Hopper & Traugott (2003: 135). It is true that the emergence of these two expressions as pragmatic markers has involved the addition of two new lexical items in English. However, as López-Couso & Seoane (2017: 283) affirm, "lexicalization, unlike grammaticalization, does not entail pragmatic enrichment, but rather an increase in semantic specificity and contentfulness." Since the pragmatic enrichment undergone by *kind of* and *sort of* is obvious, their evolution is explained more accurately from the perspective of grammaticalization than from the area of lexicalization (on the link between pragmatic enrichment and grammaticalization, see Hopper & Traugott 2003: 94).

Finally, in the emergence of *kinda* and *sorta*, it is possible to see these forms as a manifestation of morphophonological reduction, and this is a typical process in grammaticalization that results from the high frequency of co-occurrence between items (cf. Hopper & Traugott, 2003: 127 and *passim*). So for this reason, too, the diachronic evolution of *kind of* / *sort of* is considered as an illustration of grammaticalization in this book.

At the beginning of this section it was pointed out that two of the changes that *kind of* and *sort of* have undergone in their historical development (reanalysis and metaphor) have often been linked with grammaticalization, pragmaticalization and lexicalization. Once we have seen that the two markers plausibly illustrate grammaticalization, we can emphasise Hopper & Traugott's (2003) affirmation that reanalysis is "the

[2] In fact, as aptly noted by an anonymous reviewer, grammaticalization has been claimed to explain the rise of other pragmatic markers such as *like* (discussed in Fleischman and Yaguello, 2004: 141) and Spanish *en plan* (Rodríguez-Abruñeiras, 2020).

most important mechanism" for grammaticalization (2003: 39), as well as the fact that grammaticalization "always involves reanalysis" (2003: 59) and that "only reanalysis can create new grammatical structures" (2003: 64). As for the link existing between grammaticalization and metaphor, Hopper & Traugott (2003: 87) claim that "there is little doubt that metaphor is one process at work" in grammaticalization. In short, these processes of change are interconnected in Hopper & Traugott's work and there is, indeed, a reflection of this interconnection in the specific cases of *kind of* and *sort of* studied here.

CHAPTER 3. *KIND OF* AND *SORT OF* IN INNER CIRCLE VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

In inner circle varieties of English, *kind of* and *sort of* can appear in a wide range of constructions, as they can modify a number of words (such as an adjective (31), an adverb (32), a verb (33) and a numeral (34)) and phrases (like a noun phrase (35) and a prepositional phrase (36)). Besides, *kind of* and *sort of* can modify whole subordinate clauses (such as an adverbial clause of comparison (37), a reason clause (38), a nominal relative clause (39) and a *wh*-interrogative clause (40)) and they can appear alone, after a comma and at the end of a sentence, where they are prosodically detached (41). The markers can acquire both a narrow scope (e.g. when modifying a word (31)-(34)) and a wide scope (e.g. when qualifying a whole clause (37)-(40)).

(31) *Aren't you **kinda** glad we did?* (from a song by George Gershwin)[3]

(32) *She spoke **kind of** proudly.* (Quirk et al., 1985: 445)

(33) *I **sort of** saw his point*. (Denison, 2002: 3)

(34) *I mean you had **sort of** six hundred trains per division I think* (Aijmer, 1984: 120)

(35) *It's **Kind of** a Funny Story*. (title of a novel by Ned Vizzini, 2006)

(36) *He distributed the grapes **sort of** amongst the mangoes*. (Kay, 1997: 147)

(37) *What happens next?*
*Germans colonize Poland, Ukraine and European Russia, using the locals for slave labor. Over the decades this breaks down, and National Socialism collapses (**sort of** like the Soviet Union did historically, but sooner and without a cold war). Eastern Europe becomes a mess of nationalistic conflict.* (from https: // www . quora . com / What - wouldve - happened - following

[3] The song was popularized by Ella Fitzgerald (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aren%27t_You_Kind_of_Glad_We_Did%3F).

- an - Axis - victory - in - the - Second -World-War, accessed 26 April, 2018).

(38) *We'd be surprised if it's anything greater than half of the total provision, probably not that much. But, you know, it's a bit hard to call at this point,* ***sort of*** *because the rate of progress will depend on the extent to which people apply*. (from https://www.taylorwimpey.co.uk, accessed 3 May, 2018).

(39) *That's* ***sort of*** *what happened to Bill Clinton, and that could happen as soon as you have a Democratic House of Representatives that decides that it's time to go after Donald Trump in a much more serious way than it has done thus far*. (from http: // www . slate . com / articles / news _ and _ politics / trumpcast / 2017 / 04 /corruption _ abuse _ of _ power_and_undermining_the_rule_of_law_the_case_for_impeaching.html, accessed 27 April, 2018).

(40) *Also, you look at the people you work with and think: How can I treat them, and what can I tell them, so that they can do their best work? Because that's* ***sort of*** *what directing is – talking to people in a way that can best unlock their potential. Of course, with directing, the purpose is to help them realize your vision. With parenting, the purpose is for your kid to realize his. But it's a similar skill*. (from https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/14/t-magazine/natalie-portman-jonathan-safran-foer-emails.html, accessed 15 May, 2018).

(41) *This must be a joke,* ***sort of***. (Quirk et al., 1985: 451)

In addition to these central uses of *kind of* and *sort of*, speakers can use these expressions as quotative markers introducing onomatopoeic expressions and represented speech (42). The markers can also act as special-style markers because they can be followed by expressions that are technical, rare, foreign, formal, vulgar, idiomatic or particularly long, so these uses of *kind of* / *sort of* enable the speakers that use them to be creative (e.g. (43)).

(42) *I just got a visual, Sharon standing in front of the class going, [scream], while these little kids* ***kinda*** *'Señorita Flynn? Hee hee hee hee hee.'* (De Smedt et al., 2007: 248)

(43) *I mean did she* ***sort of*** *live en famille* (Aijmer, 1984: 124)

In this wide range possible syntactic constructions, *kind of* and *sort of* have different semantic values and convey several pragmatic functions, which are described in detail in the following sections.

1. SEMANTICS: DIMINISHERS, APPROXIMATORS, BOOSTERS

This section explores the different shades of meaning that speakers express when they use *kind of* and *sort of*. Thus, from the point of view of semantics, *kind of* and *sort of* can play the role of diminishers, approximators and boosters in their sentences.

1.1. *Kind of* and *sort of* as diminishers

One of the common semantic characteristic of these hedges is to diminish the meaning of the element that follows them. In other words, the strength of the meaning that is usually conveyed by a given word or phrase can be lowered because of the presence of any of the two pragmatic markers in front of them. E.g.:

(44) *It's* ***kind of*** *hard to boss people around*. (Biber et al., 1999: 871)

In this example the speaker decides to mitigate the intensity of the adjective *hard* by using the pragmatic marker *kind of,* which reduces the strong effect that the speaker would have created if they had said *It's hard / really hard / very hard to boss people around*, with the adjective appearing in its full force.

In contexts such as the one portrayed in the example just quoted, *kind of* and *sort of* can be said to act as *diminishers*, using a term suggested by Biber et al. (1999: 871; see also Margerie, 2010: 328). This term captures the function of the two pragmatic markers in these specific situations, i.e. the role of diminishing the force of the following word. However, there are other valid linguistic labels and explanations that also make reference to this scenario, which are commented on in the course of this section.

Fetzer (2009: 130-131) thus states that on the "interpersonal plane of communication, *sort of* is assigned the status of an affective marker hedging strong opinions by toning down the impact of a communicative contribution, thus reducing its imposition and at the same time establishing common ground." In example (44) *kind of* has this effect of toning down the intensity of *hard*. For Coates (1996: 152), the elements under study "have the effect of damping down the force of what we say," (see also Holmes, 1995: 74-75). Likewise, Miskovic-Lukovic (2009: 622, 693) stresses that *kind of* / *sort of* can sometimes acquire a mitigation and a downtoning function (see also Preisler, 1986: 105; Andersen, 2001: 235).

On this line, Quirk et al. (1985) refer to this specific use of *kind of* / *sort of* with the label *downtoners*, i.e. a special type of adverbs in an exhaustive semantic list that also includes items such as *a bit*, *a little*, *hardly*, *rather*, *relatively* or *somewhat* (1985: 445). Thus, (45) would be semantically comparable to *He is cleverish* (Quirk et al., 1985: 1553), in which the suffix *-ish* downtones the utterance.

(45) *He is **sort of** clever.* (Quirk et al., 1985: 446)

Within downtoners, Quirk et al. (1985: 598) further analyse *kind of* and *sort of* as *compromisers*, which also appears in the work by Margerie (2010) as applied to *kind of* / *sort of*. For her, when a speaker uses these markers they can indicate that "the notion conveyed by the verb or adjective pre-modified by the intensifier applies to some degree, but not fully" (2010: 319). Here is a case:

(46) *I **kind of** like that sort of colour*. (Margerie, 2010: 319)

If we apply Margerie's explanation to this case, we will notice that the usual meaning of the verb *like* only applies to some degree here by virtue of the premodifying function of *kind of* in front of it; the speaker likes that colour, but not to a large extent. For James (1983) *kind of* and *sort of* can be labelled as compromisers, as well, because they tone down or soften "the assertive force of their immediate co-text by 'compromising' on the full semantic significance of the structures they modify" (1983: 194). This ability to insert intensification in gradable verbs such as *like* was already commented on by Bolinger (1972: 239).

The diminishing value of our two expressions is also witnessed in contexts in which the speaker wants to soften a message that might upset other people, as Swan (1995: 156) remarks (notice, also, the contribution of *perhaps* to achieve this effect):

(47) *I **sort of** think we ought to start going home, perhaps, really.* (Swan, 1995: 156)

In this connection, Brown & Levinson (1987: 116) state that *kind of* and *sort of* serve to hedge opinions. With them a speaker can avoid giving an opinion in a clear and blunt way, and they show that idea in a manner that ends up being less clear and committed. For Brown & Levinson, this can turn into a useful strategy for avoiding the hearer becoming offended by their interlocutor's excessive frankness (1987: 116; see also Coates, 1996: 156).

The occurrence of *kind of* in example (47) can be linked with the work by Simpson (1989: 174), who refers to the capacity of *sort of* to "soften or weaken the impact of an FTA," i.e. a face-threatening act, label coined by Brown & Levinson (1987). Let us bear in mind that "any utterance which could be interpreted as making a demand or intruding on another person's autonomy can be regarded as a potential face-threatening act" (Holmes, 1995: 5). So in example (47) we witness the emergence of *kind of* for such a purpose.

In line with this softening of the impact of a given utterance, Aijmer (1984) uses the term *softener* because our two expressions can "soften a formulation which is too strong or categorical" (1984: 125), an idea also found in Crystal & Davy (1975: 92), Swan (1995: 156, 552) and Aijmer (2002: 201). Such softener use of *kind of* and *sort of* frequently appears with the adverb *just*, which yields the phrase just *sort of*. For example:

(48) *well it is just **sort of** eighteen minutes to is it.* (Aijmer, 1984: 125)

Consequently, on the basis of examples such as the previous ones, Aijmer (1984: 126) concludes that *sort of* is a linguistic device whereby a speaker can express "his attitude to the force, emphasis or certainty associated with a word," and she adds that "the speaker does not want to sound too abrupt and therefore attenuates the force or certainty of a particular word" with the marker. The same kind of diminishing value is elsewhere

called *mitigation marker* (Simpson, 1989: 174; see also Holmes, 1988: 91; and Brems, 2011: 110-111) and *deintensifier* (Lakoff, 1973: 471).

Summing up, this section shows that *kind of* and *sort of* may attenuate the intensity of the following element. This function can be referred to as *diminisher* (Biber et al., 1999; Margerie, 2010), *downtoner* (Quirk et al., 1985), *compromiser* (Quirk et al., 1985; Margerie, 2010; James, 1983), *softener* (Crystal & Davy, 1975; Aijmer, 1984; Swan, 1995), *mitigation marker* (Simpson, 1989; Holmes, 1988; Brems, 2011) and *deintensifier* (Lakoff, 1973). The present work follows Biber et al., (1999) and uses the term *diminisher* to refer to this function because it accurately reflects the ability of *kind of* / *sort of* to diminish the force of the words that they modify, although the other linguistic labels are also appropriate.

1.2. *Kind of* and *sort of* as approximators

Hengeveld & Keizer affirm that *kind of* and *sort of* can have "both an approximating and a mitigating function" (2011: 1975). Thus, in addition to the diminishing function described in the previous section, *kind of* and *sort of* can be used by English speakers to express an approximation to the idea that is usually conveyed by the element that they modify. Consider, for instance, (49):

(49) *She had **sort of** promised to help him*. (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 723)

As the speaker reports this situation, we can gather that the usual conditions for a promise to be made are nearly fulfilled in example (49), but they are not entirely or strictly satisfied. As Huddleston & Pullum (2002) explain it, in the sentence just transcribed "the conditions for application of the verbal expression are approximately satisfied" (2002: 723), since the speaker of that utterance cannot refer to a firm promise in a strict sense there.

For this reason, Huddleston & Pullum include *kind of* and *sort of* in the so-called *approximating subgroup* of degree adverbs (2002: 725). De Smedt et al. (2007: 245), Margerie (2010: 325) and Brems (2011: 315) also refer to the expressions under study as *approximators*. Likewise, Swan points out that these expressions are used "to show that one is

not speaking very exactly" (1995: 156). Fetzer adds that these markers express "fuzziness or approximation" (2009: 139), and a similar view is found in Aijmer (2002: 179) and Holmes (1988: 94-95). Itani (1995), for a similar consideration, affirms that *sort of* "indicates that the word that it modifies is to be interpreted loosely" (Itani, 1995: 89; see also Andersen, 2001: 48). Here are two examples where the loose interpretations that Itani mentions are at work:

(50) *Tom is **sort of** a bachelor.* (Itani, 1995: 90)
(51) *Tom has just got married but he is still **sort of** a bachelor.* (Itani, 1995: 90)

Because of the idea of approximation that *kind of* and *sort of* can transmit, the noun *bachelor* in these two examples must not be interpreted too rigidly. According to Itani, in these two sentences we discover that the person called Tom still acts as a single or unmarried man because of a possible open attitude with women, because he goes out with his friends, etc. Therefore, the person that hears these two sentences should not interpret the word *bachelor* in a rigorous way, with the meaning that it usually denotes, i.e. 'unmarried man.' On the contrary, the presence of its modifier *sort of* advises us to understand bachelor with this *kind of* tentativeness. Consequently, the modifying function of *sort of* acquires a highly important dimension in examples (50) and (51). This use of *sort of* as an approximator is part of what Hengeveld & Keizer (2011) describe as a repertoire existing in the English language for users to get engaged in "non-straightforward communication." They specify that "by marking different degrees of non-straightforwardness" an English speaker can show "the extent to which he is able to (or willing to) provide the exact amount of information needed for successful or felicitous communication" (Hengeveld & Keizer, 2011: 1975).

Also, Lakoff (1973) studies an application of the idea of fuzziness and approximation that is introduced by *sort of* in very particular cases. Thus, according to Lakoff the expression *sort of tall* is, when applied to a person, especially frequent to refer to people of medium height, and it is not normally used to refer to a very tall person (Lakoff, 1973: 471). Finally, Aijmer (1984) reports a specific detail about *sort of* expressing approximation. According to her, "simple non-specific verbs like *leap*,

sit, *look*, *mutter*, *feel*, *try* are often qualified by *sort of*" (Aijmer, 1984: 123). E.g.:

(52) *and he **sort of** looked at me and gasped* (Aijmer, 1984: 123)

As Aijmer explains, the insertion of *sort of* in this utterance serves the speaker to send the following message to their hearer: 'I am not good at making my point. What I say is only approximate. You can probably reconstruct what I mean from this description however' (cf. Aijmer, 1984: 123).

Thus, *kind of* and *sort of* can serve speakers to call in question the appropriateness of the word that follows the two pragmatic markers (Quirk et al., 1985: 597). On this line, Coates (1996) states that the word that appears after *kind of* and *sort of* may sometimes "not be the perfect choice" (Coates, 1996: 158; cf. also Coates, 1987: 119; Andersen, 2001: 68). Likewise, Hengeveld & Keizer (2011: 1968) affirm that *kind of* and *sort of* "qualify the applicability of properties denoted by verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions." In sentences such as *I kind of like him* (Quirk et al., 1985: 597) we can interpret that the force of *like* is reduced but we can also understand that the use of that verb is questioned. In fact, some scholars use the term *compromisers* to encompass these two particular uses of *kind of* and *sort of* at the same time (Quirk et al., 1985: 597-598; Margerie, 2010: 319).

Quirk et al. (1985) further specify that *kind of* and *sort of* can serve speakers to make a "metalinguistic" comment in discourse (Quirk et al., 1985: 618; see also Kay, 1997: 145; Andersen, 2001: 67-68; Fetzer, 2009: 131). Let us remember here that metalanguage is "a language that is used to talk about another language" (Trask, 1992: 170). In the particular case of *kind of* and *sort of*, these elements can help speakers to make a reference to the selection of an expression in the English language. On this line of thought, Kay (1997: 151) remarks that *kind of* / *sort of* can help speakers to make an apology for selecting the words that were finally used after them. In Kay's view, this may take place "when the speaker can't think of the *mot juste*" (1997: 152), as in the following case that he reports (the French expression *mot juste* is also used, in a similar analysis, by Coates, 1987: 119; 1996: 158):

(53) *There's a lot of **sort of** cross-registration going on around here.* (Kay, 1997: 152)

On this topic, Kay (1997: 153) provides evidence from a number of brief recorded interviews. Thus, he mentions the following illustrative extract from a conversation between a speaker (an informant) and a linguist:

(54) Informant: *Those who grew up in the extremely **sort of** comforting days of linguistics...*
Linguist: *Why did you say '**sort of**'?*
Informant: *I was in doubt whether 'comforting' was the word I wanted to use.* (Kay, 1997: 153)

The previous observations on the use of *kind of* / *sort of* in moments of hesitation find a foundation in this exchange, since the issue of the use of *sort of* is treated here by two people in a direct way, the interviewee acknowledging their doubts when choosing *sort of*.

The appearance of *kind of* and *sort of* in moments of hesitation can be linked with the expression of vagueness or imprecision. This can be attested in the data provided by Fetzer (2009). In one of her examples there is fuzziness associated with a moment of hesitation in a speaker, namely:

(55) *But so when he says there will be no further cuts, Michael Portillo says there will be f further cuts, he is erm **sort of** whistling in the wind?* (Fetzer, 2009: 142)

Here, the fragment where *sort of* is inserted transmits a certain imprecision, and in this fragment there are two indications of hesitation, as well: We can notice a certain delay to pronounce a word (*f further*) and what Fetzer herself calls a "hesitation device" (i.e. *erm*). In such situations Fetzer classifies *kind of* / *sort of* with the phrase "contextualization cue" (Fetzer, 2009: 135 ff.).

If we pay further attention to the appearance of the particle *erm* in this example, Brems (2011: 319) specifies that *kind of* / *sort of* can be "strewn across the discourse as fillers or hesitation markers like *er*," just as we witness here. For Brems, some instances of *kind of* and *sort of* in this specific function can be taken as unintentional, but other cases can be regarded as strategic because they serve the speaker to hold the

floor and buy time while they plan what to say next. There is a similar analysis in Aijmer (2002: 188) and Margerie (2010: 328), and the latter sees this use of *kind of* as a "marker of reflection" in a speaker when they are having a conversation.

Another point that can be added here is that, for Aijmer (1984: 126), *sort of* can emerge "as a reflection of planning" in conversations. In such specific cases, as Aijmer argues, *sort of* should be described as a *filler* rather than a *hedge*. She specifies that a filler is an element that can be used in discourse in order to fill the silence and maintain one person's right to speak. Here is a case in point:

(56) *Anyway I used to go into the hospital in the evenings and find her* ***sort of*** *in real great pain*. (Aijmer, 1984: 126)

In example (56), as Aijmer informs, *sort of* appears after a pause and for her, in fact, the pragmatic marker precisely explains why the speaker makes that pause: They are trying to find the correct words to use next (see also Holmes, 1988: 91, 93, 98, 116; and Coates, 1996: 158). Aijmer (2002: 188) indicates that *sort of* frequently appeared either preceded or followed by a pause in her study on the *London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English*. For her, this is indicative of moments of hesitation and difficulties that speakers cope with when they finally resort to *kind of* / *sort of*.

Finally, it must be noted that *kind of* and *sort of* exhibit some particular traits when they appear in collocations. The previous section, on the semantic value of the two markers as diminishers, shows that they develop a remarkable downtoning effect in sequences such as *sort of pretty* or *rather sort of*. Likewise, Andersen (2001) claims that the expressions *kind of like* and *sort of like* are especially useful for speakers to express approximation, as in the following extract:

(57) *I was* ***kind of*** *like in the middle.* (Andersen, 2001: 286)

We know that *kind of* and *sort of* are able to transmit a message of vagueness, but the co-occurrence of the markers with *like* "usually enforces a reading by which the hearer is instructed to interpret the following as a case of loose use," in Andersen's (2001: 286) words. This is what happens in example (57). Andersen further argues that both the pragmatic markers and *like* can play this role individually, but "they have a tendency to

collocate," so much so that the expressions *kind of like* and *sort of like* can even be analysed as "semi-fixed markers" expressing this idea of approximation (Andersen, 2001: 286).

1.3. *Kind of* and *sort of* as boosters

Kind of and *sort of* can appear in what Fetzer calls "an emotionally loaded context" (Fetzer, 2009: 131). This phenomenon is remarkable because on many other occasions the two pragmatic markers appear in a very different function, i.e. to lower the force of the element that follows them, as is argued above. Let us consider this example, from Brems (2011):

(58) *It's **kind of** stupid but it's **kind of** funny of you know what I mean cos the baby don't talk and as soon as the Mum and Dad's out of the room its' let's go and find the chocolate. It's so funny.* (Brems, 2011: 314)

Brems reports that, in this text, *kind of* serves the purpose of "intensifying implicatures" (2011: 314), that is, it acts as a tool that the speaker has for intensifying the meaning of something. If we pay attention to the underlined words above, we will see that the phrase *kind of* funny is similar to the one that closes the passage, *so funny*. Therefore, here *kind of* plays the same function of *so* in front of the adjective *funny*: These words boost the meaning of the adjective.

Thus, Margerie (2010) specifies that, when *kind of* and *sort of* highlight the quality of the adjective that follows them, they can be called boosters (Margerie, 2010: 322). Witness the following case:

(59) *Oh I like that song. That's wicked! ... There's gonna be DJ (name) and all that. With all hard core music. It's safe. **Kinda** wicked! Well I'm buying my ticket today.* (Margerie, 2010: 322)

Margerie observes that the role of *kind of* in this fragment is not to mitigate the force of the adjective *wicked* or to call it in question. Rather, *kind of* emphasizes it (the exclamation mark at the end of the phrase is significant enough). So Margerie indicates that the booster *kind of* takes the quality of *wicked* to a high degree, in such a way that the speaker shows a great deal of enthusiasm about the topic that they are talking about.

Another aspect about *Kind of* and *sort of* that has a connection with the preceding lines is also given by Margerie (2010). According to her, *kind of* / *sort of* can act as markers of focus, understood as the most significant new information in a sentence and often the point of the sentence (Margerie, 2010: 328; for a definition of *focus* see also Chalker & Weiner, 1998: 154; Trask, 1992: 105; and Bussmann, 1996: 167). Consider this case that Margerie reports:

(60) *I went upstairs to the BART, and told them, and I tried to tell them what train it was, and I just... I was still* ***kind of*** *like shocked.* (Margerie, 2010: 328)

Margerie (2010: 328) indicates that the speaker of this text "lays great emphasis" on the adjective *shocked*, and *kind of* serves their purpose for doing so. Consequently, the expression focus marker can be applied to *kind of* and *sort of*.

Therefore, the characteristics of the examples transcribed in this section are very different from the ones described above, with *kind of* / *sort of* lowering the force of the words that they modify. This is indicative, therefore, of the versatility that the two pragmatic markers have come to acquire in the English language.

2. PRAGMATICS: STANCE MARKERS AND HEDGING DEVICES

The expressions *kind of* and *sort of* are referred to by different labels in the relevant literature, in accordance with the terminological maze described in Chapter 1, i.e. *discourse markers* (e.g. Swan, 1995: 156; De Smedt et al., 2007: 247; Brems, 2011: 317), *discourse particles* (e.g. Aijmer, 1984: 120; Aijmer, 2002: 2; Fetzer, 2009: 132), *pragmatic markers* (e.g. Andersen, 1998: 164; Andersen, 2001: 24, 48, 55) and *pragmatic particles* (e.g. Holmes, 1988: 85; 1995: 75; Miskovic-Lukovic, 2009: 611). Of these four linguistic terms, the label *pragmatic marker* is the one chosen in this book to describe *kind of* and *sort of*. As mentioned in Chapter 1, a pragmatic marker is a word or expression that shows how discourse is built and they often reflect the speakers' views, attitudes or judgements.

Given these uses, it is justified to regard *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers for various reasons. For example, these two expressions serve speakers as vehicles to show their opinion and attitude on a given topic that is being dealt with in discourse. In previous sections of this work there are several samples of this characteristic, such as these (quoted as (45), (51) and (59) above):

(61) *He is **sort of** clever.* (Quirk et al., 1985: 446)
(62) *Tom has just got married but he is still **sort of** a bachelor.* (Itani, 1995: 90)
(63) *Oh I like that song. That's wicked! ... There's gonna be DJ (name) and all that. With all hard core music. It's safe. **Kinda** wicked! Well I'm buying my ticket today.* (Margerie, 2010: 322)

These three fragments exemplify *kind of* / *sort of* in their uses as diminishers, approximators and boosters, respectively (as just seen in the previous section), but they all have in common that the pragmatic markers help speakers to convey their opinion on the topics discussed, as we have seen. In number (61), for example, the quality that the speaker assigns to the person referred to (i.e. *clever*) is clearly reduced.

Kind of and *sort of* can be said to have a highly relevant pragmatic side because of the traits that are explained in previous sections of this study: Speakers use *kind of* and *sort of* in their desire not to be specific when dealing with a topic in a conversation with other people. In addition, *kind of* and *sort of* are especially common in conversation for a number of specific purposes: The two expressions allow language users to express themselves in an informal way, to avoid a technical tone in the transmission of information, to give information in a subjective manner and to create, in short, a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in linguistic interaction. Furthermore, *kind of* and *sort of* may signal non-dominance in conversations, to establish solidarity and rapport with a hearer, to reduce social distance in discourse and to avoid disagreement in a conversation. *Kind of* and *sort of* are also worth commenting on from a pragmatic point of view because they play the specific roles of being quotative and special-style markers. Because of these characteristics, for Fetzer (2009: 133) the pragmatic markers under examination "fulfil an important role in the negotiation of interpersonal and interactional roles in everyday talk."

Another aspect to emphasise about the use of *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers has to do with the following remarks by De Smedt et al. (2007: 247), who argue that *kind of* and *sort of* "are not tied to grammatical class boundaries anymore, and lack clear notions of scopal domain" when they are used as pragmatic markers, rather than as noun + prepositions. According to De Smedt et al. (2007: 247), in such contexts *kind of* and *sort of* "apply more diffusely to the discourse, through which they are scattered." Consider the following case:

(64) *As I remember it used to be* ***sort of*** *like fairly common for a Tuesday, that I'd pretend to be sick.* (De Smedt et al., 2007: 247)

As is claimed above, *kind of* and *sort of* show a syntactic behaviour similar to that of an adverb when they modify the word following them, as in *The room was kind of dark*, where the adjective *dark* is the modified item. By contrast, in example (64) *sort of* cannot be linked with the adverb word class and its scope is not so clear. As De Smedt et al. (2007: 247) point out, here *sort of* is inserted in discourse just to give it a component of imprecision. It is for cases such as this that *kind of* and *sort of* cannot be assigned to a given word class but rather have to be explained in terms of pragmatic markers. On the same line, Degand & Evers-Vermeul (2015: 60) affirm that linguists "have not reached a clear consensus on the boundaries of the linguistic category" of pragmatic markers (see similar opinions in Schiffrin, 1987: 32, 36, 40; and Brinton, 1996: 31).

It is now relevant to remind that, when *kind of* and *sort of* become pragmatic markers, they can sometimes fulfil the role of mere fillers or hesitation markers in discourse. The specific purpose of the two expressions here is that their speaker can hold the floor in a conversation with them (Aijmer, 1984: 126; Brems, 2011: 319). In short, pragmatics studies the function of language expressions in specific situations and the effect of speakers' choice of words and expressions in their social interaction, so the uses just mentioned of *kind of* and *sort of* to make interaction more informal and relaxed must obviously be comprised within the framework of pragmatic studies. Because of all these aspects, *kind of* and *sort of* possess a significant pragmatic dimension that has to be added to their study in other areas such as semantics. The following two sections (2.1 and 2.2) specifically focus on two key pragmatic functions of *kind of* and *sort of*: Their role as stance markers and as hedges.

2.1. *Kind of* and *sort of* as stance markers

English speakers have a number of grammatical devices available to express their stance (Biber et al., 1999: 969). So, for example, stance is conveyed through the adverb *unfortunately* in the following sentence: *Unfortunately, we cannot do anything about it* (Biber et al., 1999: 969). Likewise, language users can resort to *kind of* and *sort of* to express their stance about the content of a clause, hence the specific terms *stance adverbs* and *stance adverbials* that Biber et al. (1999: 562) apply to them. Witness the following case:

(65) *It was **kind of** strange.* (Biber et al., 1999: 557)

In example (65) we do not find the expression of an unquestionable scientific fact but rather a personal comment about one thing or event that the speaker experienced. Biber et al. (1999: 853) further specify that *kind of* and *sort of* can be classified under the group of the so-called "epistemic stance adverbials," which express "the speaker's judgement about the certainty, reliability, and limitations of the proposition." Here is an example to explore this trait:

(66) *She spoke **kind of** proudly*. (Quirk et al., 1985: 445)

This sentence shows the type of judgement referred to in the above-mentioned quote by Biber et al. (1999: 853): The speaker in example (66) makes the assessment that the woman referred to spoke somewhat proudly.

Kind of and *sort of* can also function as "stance adverbials of imprecision" (Biber et al., 1999: 853). The examples included in this section so far point in this direction because they all transmit a shade of vagueness and approximation to the idea that is usually conveyed by the words that are modified by *kind of* / *sort of*. In example (66), for instance, the description of the way in which a woman spoke is not given too consistently, there is just an approximation to the full idea that is usually transmitted by the adverb *proudly*.

There is a strong link between the idea of stance adverbials of imprecision (in Biber et al's, 1999 terminology) and the role as approximators

that *kind of* / *sort of* can acquire. However, the two markers can serve speakers to give personal opinions in all the three semantic values explained in this book: In examples (61) to (63) above we see that the pragmatic value of stance markers is clearly present in the uses of *kind of* / *sort of* as diminishers (e.g. *He is sort of clever*), approximators (e.g. *he is still sort of a bachelor*) and boosters (e.g. *Kinda wicked!*).

Another observation raised by Lakoff (1973) emphasizes the association of the idea of stance with the case of *kind of* / *sort of.* According to him, speakers can express their points of view about things that need not be necessarily and rigidly true or false. Speakers can mean that, for them, something is true just to a certain extent (1973: 458, 471). In order to express such nuances, then, users of English can resort to *kind of* / *sort of*. In example (65), for instance (It's *kind of* strange), the speaker does not refer to the characteristic of *strange* in a conclusive way but rather makes an approximation to that concept when (s)he shows her/ his opinion.

Let us also bear in mind that visions on one particular event can easily vary from one person to another. As Lakoff (1973: 458) remarks, "tallness for a pygmy and tallness for a basketball player are obviously different." Consequently, when a speaker says *She spoke kind of proudly*, as in (66), they accommodate the resources of the English language to the expression of their own perception of the external world. In sentences such as this there is a considerable personal component of vagueness. Thus, in this example the speaker says that a certain situation (that a person spoke proudly) took place just to a certain extent, and this way the meaning of the words that accompany *kind of* and *sort of* becomes fuzzy and approximate (see Lakoff, 1973: 458, 471; Holmes, 1988: 94, 116).

2.2. *Kind of* and *sort of* as hedges

One of the linguistic terms that are applied to classify the pragmatic behaviour of *kind of* and *sort of* in the literature on the topic is *hedge* (along with the related terms *hedging expressions* and *hedging functions*). These classifications can be found, for example, in the work by Lakoff (1973: 471-472), who introduced the term *hedge* (cf. Bussmann, 1996: 205), and in numerous linguistics works, e.g. Simpson (1989: 174), Holmes (1995: 72), Brinton (1996: 32), Coates (1996: 152), Kay (1997: 145), Biber

et al. (1999: 542), Andersen (2001: 48), van Baalen (2001), Yaguchi et al. (2004: 67), Gries & David (2007), Fetzer (2009: 129), Miskovic-Lukovic (2009: 603), Margerie (2010: 326), Brems (2011: 5), Overstreet (2011: 304) or Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015: 281).

For Biber et al. (1999: 557), hedges are elements that can be used to convey imprecision and, among then, we can find *kind of* and *sort of*, as in the following illustrative examples:

(67) *It was **kind of** strange*. (Biber et al., 1999: 557)
(68) *I ain't seen this series I just **sort of** remember from the last series*. (Biber et al., 1999: 557)

These two fragments carry a significant load of imprecision. In (67) the speaker is vague because they do not classify a given thing or event as very strange or really strange; it was just somewhat strange. Likewise, in example (68) the speaker cannot say that they clearly remember something but have to admit that they remember a series just a little.

In contrast to this scenario, there is a slightly different definition of the term *hedge* in the work by other scholars, such as Trask (1992). For him, a hedge is "an expression added to an utterance which permits the speaker to reduce his/her commitment to what she/he is saying," e.g. *I think, I suppose, I fancy* (1992: 128). There is a similar view in Coates (1996: 154), who adds that, with hedges, speakers also "lack confidence in the truth of the proposition" expressed in an utterance. Therefore, in this conception examples (67) and (68) would reveal the fact that the speakers did not want to emotionally involve themselves too much when saying those words; they preferred to keep a certain distance from the topics that were being commented on.

The word *hedge* is also recorded in the English language as a verb, with the meaning 'to avoid committing oneself' (*OED* s.v. *hedge* v.). As a verb, *hedge* is intimately connected with *kind of* / *sort of*: In example (67), *It was kind of strange*, a speaker refers to a situation in an indirect way, so they avoid being very clear about it. In other words, in that example the speaker is hedging a comment.

Summing up the previous thoughts, there are two conceptions of hedge in the relevant literature, i.e. hedge as a marker of imprecision and hedge as a marker of non-commitment. However, both views overlap to a large extent and can be equally applied to cases such as examples

(67) and (68). Sentences like these contain both a message tinged with imprecision and an expression of non-commitment towards a topic and, for that reason, both will be labelled as *hedges* in this work.

The previous lines also bring to light the fact that the term *hedge* does not refer to a grammatical category but rather captures a pragmatic function that words can carry out in practice. In this line, Fraser (2010: 22) claims that the hedging function can be fulfilled by words belonging to different word classes, such as adverbs, pronouns or verbs. Thus, the ability of *kind of* and *sort of* to act as hedges is discussed here in order to analyse the various nuances that they are able to convey in the area of pragmatics.

The pragmatic value of *kind of* and *sort of* as hedges must be closely linked with their semantic value as approximators: *Kind of* and *sort of* can serve speakers to question the use of other words. As hedges, *kind of* / *sort of* can mark imprecision in the choice of words in cases such as the following (see also Biber et al., 1999: 557):

(69) *Don't you get the feeling that she's living there in that house, and the rest of it's* ***sort of*** *derelict or totally deserted*. (Hengeveld & Keizer, 2011: 1968)

In this example, the hedge *sort of* indicates that the choice of the adjective *derelict* after it is questionable.

Another way of hedging utterances in English is by means of modal auxiliary verbs, as is the case of *might* in the example below:

(70) *I* ***might*** *go to the party.*

Given this state of affairs, it can be wondered whether it is possible to see the two devices at work side by side or whether their use together could be regarded as redundant. Consider the following case:

(71) *When I get ready to read I always think about what kind of story it is, you know, and what I'll have to do to get into it. I* ***kind of*** *imagine myself in the story, even before I start reading, and what it's going to be like in there and I* <u>*might*</u> ***kind of*** *review stuff from other stories or from my life that I might need to know as I read...* (Wilhelm, 2016: 93)

In this example, as in number (70), *might* expresses tentativeness, and *kind of* also moves along the same line. Therefore, it is possible for both hedging devices to co-occur; they retain that function even if they appear side by side (cf. *I might kind of review...*).

Fraser (2010: 15) also remarks that non-native speakers may fail to use hedges such as *kind of* / *sort of*. That way, when they do not hedge as native speakers do, they may sound "impolite, offensive, arrogant, or simply inappropriate" in their speech (2010: 15). For this reason, linguists highlight the association of *kind of* / *sort of* as hedges with the notion of pragmatic competence, that is "the ability to communicate your intended message with all its nuances in any socio-cultural context and to interpret the message of your interlocutor as it was intended" (Fraser, 2010: 15).

Hedges are useful for speakers to avoid making explicit statements and their interpersonal function to take account of the feelings of the addressee, according to van Baalen (2001). She points out that hedging devices such as *kind of* and *sort of* "help the speaker to avoid imposing on people." James (1983: 198) also states that, by doing this, speakers can transmit certain degrees of politeness (see also Holmes, 1995: 95-96; Andersen, 2001: 60), as also seen in (72):

(72) *It's* ***sort of*** *warm in here.* (Fraser, 2010: 25)

According to Fraser, we can interpret this sentence not just as an innocent expression about the temperature existing at a specific place. Rather, there is a further possible inference: The speaker may also want their hearer to open the window (just one of the possible illocutions of (72)). In this example we can perceive that the speaker may feel too warm, so they want the window to be open to prevent the place / the room to be even warmer. By means of *sort of*, the speaker hedges their speech and introduces a polite request.

Summing up, it is justified to regard *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers because of a number of key aspects from this field:

- They serve speakers as vehicles to show their opinion on a given topic in conversation.
- They are useful for speakers to establish a particularly good interaction with their hearers. They can create a pleasant atmosphere in conversation.

- They are used by speakers in their desire not to be specific when dealing with a particular topic.
- They allow language users to express themselves in an informal way and to avoid a technical tone in the transmission of information.
- They can be used for a speaker to signal non-dominance in conversation.
- They are useful for a speaker to establish solidarity and rapport with a hearer and to reduce social distance in discourse.
- They serve speakers to avoid disagreement in conversation.
- They play the specific roles of being quotative and special-style markers.

Kind of and *sort of* exhibit two important pragmatic values: They can act as stance markers and as hedges. In the former function, they help speakers to show their point of view on something, and they are also especially useful to express points of view about things that need not be necessarily and rigidly true or false, i.e. about something that is true just to a certain extent. The stance marker function coexists with each of the three semantic values that are discussed in this volume, as *kind of* and *sort of* reveal a speaker's stance in all their three values as diminishers, approximators and boosters. This can be attested in examples such as (61) to (63) above.

Another key pragmatic value of *kind of* and *sort of* is that of hedges. There are two conceptions of hedge in the relevant literature, i.e. hedge as a marker of non-commitment and hedge as a marker of imprecision, but both characteristics overlap to a large extent and are present in the two pragmatic markers under study. The pragmatic value of *kind of* and *sort of* as hedges must be closely linked with their semantic value as diminishers (when information is given in a mitigated way) and with their value as approximators (when information is given with imprecision). These two combinations can be seen in examples (71) and (69) above, respectively.

Table 2 below shows the coexistence of the three semantic values of *kind of* and *sort of* with their two pragmatic dimensions as stance markers and hedges, as just discussed (on the overlap of semantic and pragmatic values in *kind of* / *sort of*, see Biber et al., 1999: 972-973; van Baalen,

2001). This classification is the one applied to the examples on World Englishes analysed in Chapter 5.

Table 2: Coexistence of semantic and pragmatic values in *kind of* and *sort of*.

Semantic value	**Stance marker**	**Hedge**
Diminisher	✓	✓
Approximator	✓	✓
Booster	✓	

CHAPTER 4. WORLD ENGLISHES AND THE STUDY OF PRAGMATIC MARKERS

1. MODELS OF ANALYSIS OF WORLD ENGLISHES

English has achieved the status of a global language nowadays because of the large number of speakers that are fluent or competent in it across the world (Crystal, 2008: 422-423; 2010: 371; 2012: 6). In fact, it is one of the languages that have been most widely used in the history of humankind (Smith & Nelson, 2009: 428; Crystal, 2012: 189; Tinsley & Board, 2017). As already introduced in Chapter 1, there are several reasons that explain why such a situation has come to exist, which are usually explained as the three or four diasporas (Kachru et al., 2006: 2-3; Bolton, 2009: 293 ff.; Kachru et al., 2009: vii-viii).

After the first diaspora (that took place in the expansion of English in Wales and Ireland), the second diaspora implied the expansion of English as a result of the pioneering voyages of people from Britain to America, Asia and the Antipodes (Crystal, 2012: 29 ff.; van Gelderen, 2014: 317), as already mentioned in Chapter 1. The first permanent settlement of British people in the USA, one of the countries with most English speakers now, dates back to the year 1607 (Finegan, 2008: 384; Schneider, 2009: 59; Crystal, 2012: 31; Mugglestone, 2012: 518; Baugh & Cable, 2013: 252, 341; van Gelderen, 2014: 317; Baker, 2017: 1). Then, the dissemination of the language became even more important with the colonial developments that took place within the British Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries, which constitute the third diaspora (Crystal, 2008: 427; 2012: 29, 120; Baugh & Cable, 2013: 284; van Gelderen, 2014: 252). Indeed, the Empire came to cover vast areas of the world at those times, which meant that there was also an immense number of people exposed to the English language then (Leith, 1997: 200; Crystal, 2008: 426, 2012: 79; King, 2009a: 27; Baugh & Cable, 2013: 282; van Gelderen, 2014: 252-253).

A further significant factor for the pre-eminence of English in the world was its adoption as an official language by newly independent states in the mid 20th century (Crystal, 2012: 29, 79; McArthur, 2012:

468-469; van Gelderen, 2014: 252). Thus, English has been made the language of the government, the law courts or the educational system in many countries where it acts as a second language coexisting with the mother tongue, or first language, of the native people. This state of affairs is present now in countries such as Singapore, the Philippines, India, Nigeria or Ghana (Crystal, 2008: 424-425; 2012: 4).

At the moment, then, English is spoken as a native language by large amounts of citizens around the world, in such countries as the USA, Canada, the UK, Ireland, Australia or New Zealand. However, many other people resort to this language even though it is not their mother tongue (cf. Crystal, 2005: 448; 2008: 424-425; 2012: 4; McArthur, 2012: 478; van Gelderen, 2014: 254). In addition, English has achieved a global status because it has been made a priority for foreign language teaching in many countries. This is the case of Spain, Germany, Russia or Brazil, as an example of what Kachru et al. (2006: 2-3) would call the fourth diaspora (Crystal, 2008: 430-431; 2012: 5; van Gelderen, 2014: 253).

We should note here that there is a close link between the widespread use of English and the military, political, economic, technological and cultural power of the speakers that have contributed to its diffusion in the course of history (Crystal, 2008: 426; 2012: 7, 9). In this sense, apart from the colonial expansion of the British Empire, we must highlight the leadership of the British and American economies during the 19th and 20th centuries, which fostered the global use of English that can be attested in our society today (Crystal, 2008: 426-427; 2012: 9-10, 80-81; McArthur, 2012: 457; van Gelderen, 2014: 253). Since the 20th century, the language has enjoyed a remarkable position as a tool for political communication in international organisations such as the United Nations or the Commonwealth (Crystal, 2008: 427; 2010: 367; 2012: 12, 86-87; McArthur, 2012: 466) and it has become an appreciated medium of communication in the academic field worldwide, as well (Crystal, 2008: 430-431; 2012: 13, 112). The prominence of English in the worlds of entertainment (e.g. cinema or popular music), the media or tourism in the past decades is to be remarked here, too (Leith, 1997: 199; Crystal, 2008: 427-429; 2012: 30, 92-93, 99-104; McArthur, 2012: 467).

Summing up the previous considerations, Crystal (2012: 59) argues that the current global status of English is mainly the result of two factors: The expansion of the British colonial power, which reached its highest point towards the end of the 19th century, and the consolidation

of the USA as the most powerful nation in the world's economy in the 20th century.

As a consequence of the spread of English across the world, several varieties of the language have emerged. Each of these varieties has distinctive characteristics "in its use of sounds, grammar, and vocabulary" (Crystal, 2012: 29; see also Leith, 1997: 208; Crystal, 2008: 435; McArthur, 2012: 461; Baugh & Cable, 2013: 284, 311). Such a wide use of English in the world has been graphically depicted by Kachru (e.g. 1985: 12; 1988: 5) in his Concentric Circles Model, which includes three circles that roughly correspond to what is traditionally known as English as a Native Language (ENL), English a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Thus, the inner circle thus refers to the traditional bases of the language, where it is used as a primary or native language, which includes the USA, Canada, the UK, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. The outer circle makes reference to areas where English is used in the country's institutions and plays a significant role as a second language among the population, e.g. Nigeria, India, Singapore or the Philippines. Finally, the expanding circle includes nations that recognise the importance of English as an international language but have not experienced periods of colonization, e.g. China, Japan or Greece (see also Bolton, 2009: 292; Crystal, 2012: 60-61; Baugh & Cable, 2013: 398; van Gelderen, 2014: 255-256).

This linguistic variation in English has made it appropriate to use the terms *New Englishes* and *World Englishes* to describe the linguistic panorama existing in the past decades (Kachru, 1985: 26; Crystal, 2005: 502; 2008: 422, 433; 2012: 142; Schneider, 2007: 2-3; Kachru et al., 2009; McArthur, 2012: 447; van Gelderen, 2014: 251; Davies, 2015; Seoane, 2016: 1). Kachru's (1985) Concentric Circles Model is the first that tries to capture this complex reality, although many other models have been proposed in the field (as revised by Buschfeld & Kautsch, 2020), such as McArthur (1987), Görlach (1990) and Strevens (1992), among others. One of the most influential models to date, though, is Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model of Postcolonial Englishes. This model describes the historical evolution of Postcolonial Englishes from the first times when English is taken to a new territory (2007: 33) until "new varieties of the formerly new variety emerge, as carriers of new group identities within the overall community" (2007: 54). At this stage, "regional and social dialects, linguistic markers (accents, lexical expressions, and structural

patterns) which carry a diagnostic function only within the new country emerge" (2007: 54). The model posits the existence of five phases in this process that label the different degrees of relation with the variety of English planted by the settlers in a particular territory, i.e. (1) foundation > (2) exonormative stabilization > (3) nativization > (4) endonormative stabilization > (5) differentiation (2007: 33-55). Thus, as Postcolonial varieties of English develop according to their particular socio-linguistic and cultural background, they evolve in this five-phase scale. Therefore, particular historical events such as the ratification of a particular act or some public rejection of the settlers' rules justifies the decision to consider that a given linguistic variety has entered phase 4, for example.

However useful Schneider's Dynamic Model is for the evolution of Postcolonial varieties, it only pays attention to internal factors and, therefore, it fails to fully capture the complexity of recent social phenomena such as the role played by globalization and the expansion of the Internet, which favours international relations and contact among linguistic varieties found in distant territories. For this reason, in order to account for the role played by external forces in the evolution of Englishes spoken in all kinds of territories (not only Postcolonial ones), Mair (2013) proposes the World System of Englishes Model, and Buschfeld & Kautsch (2017) propose a new model that takes into account intra- and extra-territorial forces, the EIF Model.

Mair's (2013) World System of Englishes Model is based on "World Language System" proposed for sociology by de Swaan (2002). For this reason, Mair's (2013) model takes into account sociological aspects such as the mobility of people and also the role played by new digital media, which results in high-contact polyglossic scenarios, very typical of the sociolinguistics of globalization. Buschfeld & Kautsch's (2017) EIF Model, in turn, pays tribute to Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model and aims at integrating Postcolonial and non-Postcolonial Englishes by introducing the notions of extra- and intra-territorial forces that constantly operate in the development of Englishes, regardless of their origin. Among extra-territorial forces, Buschfeld and Kautsch (2017) list colonization, language policies, globalization and tourism, inter alia. Intra-territorial forces include, for example, attitudes towards colonizing power, acceptance of globalization and socio-demographic background. An advantage of the EIF Model is that, since it is not restricted to Postcolonial Englishes, it sees the development from EFL to ESL and, eventually, to ENL.

For the purposes of this volume, we resort to Kachru's (1985) inner and outer circles, because we agree with Leuckert & Rüdiger (2021: 483) that although these labels may give rise to certain conceptual issues (see Bruthiaux, 2003), "they offer easy handles to refer to regionally and historically distinct types of varieties" (Leuckert & Rüdiger, 2021: 483). In fact, two of the varieties analysed in this piece of research qualify as inner circle varieties (namely BrE and AmE), while the other two are clear examples of outer circle varieties (Phil and SingE). Likewise, because the two models are not contradictory, we also classify the two outer circle varieties according to their phase of development according to Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model, because, as Leuckert & Rüdiger (2021: 483) put it, although more recent models, such as Buschfeld & Kautzsch's (2017, 2020) "allow for a more fine-grained and dynamic approach to theorising English varieties," they are "a bit more unwieldy in their terminological expressions." The description of PhilE and SingE according to Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model is presented in section 2 below.

2. THE VARIETIES STUDIED IN THIS VOLUME

The varieties studied in this volume are, as mentioned, British English (BrE), American English (AmE), Singapore English (SingE) and Philippines English (PhilE). The former two can be considered native varieties of English that need no introduction, while the latter two are Postcolonial Englishes, which can be described in Schneider's (2007) terms[4].

As mentioned above, in Singapore and the Philippines English is mainly used as a second language (e.g. Bautista & Gonzalez, 2009: 130). The fact that SingE and PhilE are non-native varieties makes them ideal objects for this study on *kind of* and *sort of* in the world, since the infor-

[4] Of course, SingE and PhilE could also be described according to the more recent EIF Model (Buschfeld & Kautsch, 2017). However, so far detailed descriptions of SingE and PhilE from an EIF perspective have not been provided. Therefore, for the purposes of this work, Schneider (2007) constitutes the perfect framework, as it allows us to describe the varieties according to their developmental phase, and by following his model this work ties in with other studies on Postcolonial Pragmatics (e.g. Rüdiger, 2021, on *like*).

mation obtained from them complements the data from native varieties. Besides, they are interesting because they belong to two areas of the world that are distant from the UK and the USA but are geographically related, in Southeast Asia. In addition, SingE and PhilE have had different superstrate languages: BrE and AmE respectively. Therefore, all these facts contribute to the value of the corpus analysis provided here, for this book studies the possible differences existing among BrE, AmE, SingE and PhilE and the possible dissimilarities between the latter two on the grounds of their superstrate. Let us bear in mind here that by superstrate, or superstratum, we mean the more dominant language influence on the native language of the indigenous people, i.e. the substrate, or substratum (Bussmann, 1996: 464-465; King, 2009b: 31; Crystal, 2010: 347; van Gelderen, 2014: 272). For a start, then, here follows a brief summary of why and how SingE and PhilE are used in these two areas of the world.

Singapore was a British colony in the 19th century, which soon became economically prosperous (Bolton, 2009: 296; Baugh & Cable, 2013: 318; van Gelderen, 2014: 252). It obtained its independence from the British Crown in 1963 as part of Malaysia, and in 1965 it got its secession from this country, and nowadays it is a republic (Pillai, 1983: 45 ff.; Bautista & Gonzalez, 2009: 130; Mugglestone, 2012: 527).

In Singapore the most widely spoken languages are Mandarin Chinese, Malay and Tamil, together with English, which has become very important in the fields of the government, the legal system, commerce, industry and education since the independence of the country (Crystal, 2008: 423; 2010: 368; 2012: 57, Bautista & Gonzalez, 2009: 131; McArthur, 2012: 483; Baugh & Cable, 2013: 319, 405). The use of English has also increased among local families in the past decades according to Bautista & Gonzalez (2009: 131) and Crystal (2012: 57). All the four languages just mentioned are official in the country now (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2009: 131; McArthur, 2012: 464, 480; Lim, 2015: 262). For this reason, Bolton (2009: 292), Crystal (2012:174) and Baugh & Cable (2013: 398), among many others, refer to this country as a multilingual society (see also Leimgruber, 2012). Let us take into account, in fact, that the four official languages in Singapore belong to four different families, i.e. Sino-Tibetan (Chinese), Austronesian (Malay), Dravidian (Tamil) and Indo-European (English) (as found, for example, in Crystal, 2010: 308-309, 319-321, 328, 469, 476, 482).

We must also be aware of the presence of "different levels of code-mixing" in Singapore (Crystal, 2012: 174). Thus, apart from SingE, there is also Singlish, i.e. a hybrid of English, Chinese and Malay, as Crystal (2012: 174) explains, or a colloquial variant of SingE, as Collins & Yao (2013) state. According to Crystal (2012: 189), SingE (or Standard British English in this country) has traditionally been used for intelligibility, whereas Singlish has been resorted to by many people to emphasize their identity (Leith, 1997: 208-210; Crystal, 2005: 502, 2010: 52 ff.; Schneider, 2007: 158, 160; McArthur, 2012: 480). As a token of the difference between SingE and Singlish, Crystal (2008: 433-434, 2012: 174-175) reports a plea made by the Singaporean Prime Minister in 1999 to the citizens in his country to reduce the use of Singlish in favour of SingE. In his view, this would mean that Singapore would acquire a greater international role (see also McArthur, 2012: 480). Bautista & Gonzalez (2009: 135) report the situation in this country by establishing a contrast between two varieties within SingE, which they term Colloquial Singapore English and Standard Singapore English (see also Lim, 2004: 19; Bruckmaier, 2016: 118): The former has traditionally been considered a low variety, used at home and in casual situations. The latter, by contrast, has been regarded as a high variety, used in formal settings, in education, in writing "and is almost identical to Standard English" (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2009: 135).

On the other hand, writing about attitudes on language use in Singapore, Baugh & Cable (2013: 319) state that the preeminent position of English in Singapore was called in question by important public figures such as Lee Kuan Yew, the country's founder and first Prime Minister. In his view, this situation entailed the loss of Asian values, so he promoted the use of Chinese.

Regarding the Philippines, it was an American colony from 1898 on, after more than 300 years of Spanish rule. It got its independence from the United States in 1946 (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2009: 131; Bolton, 2009: 296; Mugglestone, 2012: 523, 525; van Gelderen, 2014: 252, 319). Now it is a republic with two official languages, English and Filipino, although there is a considerable number of native languages and dialects spoken (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2009: 132; Crystal, 2010: 368; Kirkpatrick, 2018). Filipino is the name that was given to the national language of the Philippines in the country's constitution (Borlongan, 2016: 235-236; Schneider, 2007: 141). It is a standarized form of Tagalog, a language from Luzon,

the largest and most important island of the country, where the capital city (Manila) is located (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2009: 132; Crystal, 2010: 328). Filipino belongs to the Austronesian family of languages (Crystal, 2010: 328, 482) and, as Collins & Yao (2013) state, it is common among the population in intimate contexts.

Recent data from the British Council indicate that the Philippines is one of the largest English-speaking countries in the world, and most speakers have at least some degree of fluency in English (see also Collins & Yao, 2013). The language is the medium for commerce, law and education. Although the use of English in this country helped to promote its economy in the past decades, recently there have been opinions in favour of strengthening the position of English even more, e.g. opinions for making the Philippines a stronger country as a destination for courses on English as a second language (see also Bautista & Gonzalez, 2009: 132).

The previous lines mention the difference between Standard British English (SingE) and Singlish in Singapore, where they have been used for intelligibility and identity, respectively. As Crystal (2012: 189) informs, there has been a similar state of affairs in the Philippines, but in this case the contrast is between Standard American English and Taglish (see also Schneider, 2007: 142). In these two zones there has been an opposition between a high variety (i.e. Standard Brisith English / Standard American English) and a low variety (i.e. Singlish / Taglish), so there have been situations of digglosia according to Crystal (2012: 189). Diglossia is a sociolinguistic term that refers to a situation where two or more varieties are used by the same speakers under different conditions (Chalker & Weiner, 1998: 115). Crystal (2010: 43) specifies that diglossic situations arise when language varieties become markers of social structure: Each variety has its own set of social functions, and consequently one of them becomes the medium for ordinary conversations, whereas the other is used for special purposes, mainly for formal speech and writing. That is why linguists refer to them as the low and high variety, respectively.

In spite of this diglossic situation, Collins & Yao (2013) affirm that many young Philippine citizens are currently expressing positive attitudes towards PhilE and consider that it contributes to their Filipino identity. Besides, Bautista & Gonzalez (2009: 137) claim that it is usually easy for people to switch from the high to the low variety both in Singapore and in the Philippines. On the same line, Bolton (2009: 305) states that

the effects of globalization are bringing about numerous cases of multilingualism in the outer circle, in the following way: In countries such as Singapore many young people may spend their childhood in their parents' society but may later move to inner circle societies, such as the UK or North America, to continue their education. As a consequence of this, these young people are multilingual, move from Western to Asian societies easily and switch their linguistic codes easily, as well. Regarding the use and consideration of English among young people in Singapore, Kachru (2009: 454) mentions a recent elevation of English to the status of first, or mother, language by this social group, as well as a "new revival" and "fresh awakening" of English in the Philippine society in recent times, too.

In this scenario, it is fitting to mention that Schneider (2007: 141, 143, 153, 160) places SingE in phase 4 (endonormative stabilization) and PhilE in phase 3 (nativization) (see also Collins & Yao, 2013). In a more recent paper, however, Borlongan (2016: 238) claims that PhilE is already at the beginning of phase 4 (see also Mohamad, 2016: 8; Biermeier, 2017: 41; Collins & Borlongan, 2017: 18; Suárez-Gómez, 2018: 290-292) but, still, SingE shows a more advanced position in Borlongan's account. Borlongan (2016: 236) claims that the Philippines' goal is to become a bilingual nation resorting to English and Filipino, while Singapore is about to become a monolingual-in-English country reaching phase 5 (differentiation), i.e. the step taken by countries such as New Zealand or Canada (cf. similar views in Tan, 2012: 126; and Sim, 2014). In a later revision of his Dynamic Model, Schneider himself (2014: 13) states that PhilE can be placed at phase 4 and that SingE retains its more advanced position.

On the different positions reached by PhilE and SingE, Martin (2014: 81) points out that, unlike SingE, "which brings pride to Singaporeans of various social classes," PhilE is not "an identity carrier for most Filipinos." She adds that this variety "continues to be associated with elitism and anti-nationalist sentiments, despite its being desired for instrumental reasons, such as becoming successful in higher education or getting a job abroad" (Martin, 2014: 81; see similar comments in Schneider, 2007: 141-143, 156-157, 160).

3. PRAGMATIC MARKERS IN WORLD ENGLISHES: THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Since pragmatics has to do with language use in a social context, the study of pragmatic markers in varieties of English spoken all around the globe in a myriad of different cultural contexts requires a particular lens that captures complex human relations and their linguistic implications. Thus, Kachru (2017) mentions several cultural differences between the inner and the outer circle that condition communication and the notions of face and politeness. For example, societies in the inner circle tend to be more based on the individual self, while in many outer circle societies the familiar self predominates. This has linguistic consequences, for example, regarding face-threatening acts and the alleged anti-democratic nature of modal *must*, which is is dispreferred in the inner circle, as noted by Hansen (2018: 247-249), among others. Some cultures with an independent view of self tend to value autonomy, while those with an interdependent view prioritize fulfilling roles and maintaining balance in relationships. The self in the latter is situation-bound and defined by interpersonal relationships, while the former sees itself as a self-contained unit with invariable internal attributes. These cultural differences can lead to differing associations with individualism, with some viewing it negatively as selfishness (Hansen, 2018: 248). A second example of how cultural differences condition communication is found in the expression of requests. As Kachru (2017: 277-278) puts it, in many outer circle cultures it is appropriate for a parent to request a teacher to keep an eye on their teenage child, "[i]t is not considered an imposition on the addressee and hence face-threatening; it is considered highly complimentary and shows the respect and trust that parents have in teachers. Such a request, therefore, is considered face-enhancing" (Kachru, 2017: 278). A third example of how the notion of face differs across cultures is the reaction to compliments: in the outer circle accepting a compliment is "a sign of arrogance or complacency", while in the inner circle it is considered appropriate behaviour (Kachru, 2017: 278).

These, and other, cultural differences make pragmatics a highly interesting field in variationist studies. Thus, speech acts and politeness have been analysed across cultures since the mid-1980s (e.g. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984) and the acquisition of interlanguage pragmatics has also

been the focus of more recent studies (e.g. Barron, 2003). In the particular area of World Englishes, we find relatively early pragmatic studies such as Kachru's (1985) on non-native Englishes, Kachru (1991) on speech acts, and Valentine (1991) on discourse markers in Indian English. More recently, requests (e.g. Kasanga, 2003, 2006), apologies (e.g. Kasanga and Lwanga-Lumu, 2007) and politeness and face (e.g. Anchimbe, 2006; 2008; 2018) have received much attention. All these studies can be said to be framed in postcolonial pragmatics (term first introduced by Anchimbe & Janney, 2010), a label parallel to Postcolonial Englishes (Schneider, 2007), because postcolonial speech communities are idiosyncratic in a number of aspects:

> Postcolonial speech communities are characterized by extreme ethnic, cultural, and lingual diversity and by social, economic, and political inequities and tensions exacerbated by their colonial histories. Their ethnic, cultural, and lingual heterogeneity is reflected in numerous ways in everyday linguistic communication. Through language education, institutionalized European official languages, and influences of the mass media, Western patterns of communication introduced into these multilingual, multiethnic communities during colonialism have become intermixed with traditional native ways of interacting in various ways. (Anchimbe & Janney, 2010: 1451)

In this context, then, postcolonial pragmatics is concerned with investigating hybrid language and communication practices in postcolonial contexts. It aims to understand these practices within their specific social and cultural environments, and to explain their significance without imposing Western analytical frameworks. Thus, according to Anchimbe & Janney (2010: 1451-1452) postcolonial pragmatics pays attention to aspects such as:

- influences of indigenous pragmatic practices on European language use and vice-versa;
- pragmatic functions of choices of languages (e.g. code-switching);
- discursive constructions of social roles, identities, etc.;
- all forms of interlingual and interethnic accommodation and non-accommodation;

- postcolonial 'refunctionalizations' of Western speech acts, discourse markers, etc.;
- influences of indigenous notions of decorum, respect, and proper behavior in face-to-face conversation;
- lingual and ethnic participation in, and exclusion from, postcolonial media. (Adapted from Anchimbe & Janney, 2010: 1451-1452)

Some of these aspects are discussed in the case studies that we review in the next section.

4. PRAGMATIC MARKERS IN SINGAPORE AND PHILIPPINE ENGLISH

In the last decades, a plethora of studies have focused on pragmatic markers in postcolonial territories and also in Kachru's (1985) expanding circle. Some varieties that have been the focus on pragmatic studies are: Indian English (Lange, 2009); Malaysian English (Tay et al., 2016); Ugandan English (Isingoma, 2016); Zanzibar English (Mohr, 2021); Nigerian English (Honkanen & Müller, 2021); several expanding-circle varieties (Collet et al., 2021 on the use of *so*); Korean English (Rüdiger, 2021, on *like*). For reasons of space, in this section, we will only pay attention to those studies on the two outer circle varieties analysed in this volumen, namely SingE and PhilE.

SingE has a large number of pragmatic markers, some of English origin (e.g. *one*, as studied by Bao, 2009; *basically*, studied by Lange, 2021), loans from varieties of Chinese, such as *ma, mei* and *ho* (Gupta, 1992), and native, emblematic markers such as *lah* (probably the most discussed and the earliest described marker, e.g. Richards & Tay, 1977; Platt & Weber, 1980: 76ff; Lira, 1986: 213). Naturally, most of these markers have been studied in Colloquial Singapore English, rather than in Standard Singapore English.

Thus, Gupta (1992) focuses on eleven pragmatic markers used in Colloquial Singapore English that fall into three main gropus, namely contradictory (e.g. *ma*), assertive (e.g. *mei, ge*) and tentative (e.g. *ho, ha*). Her findings suggest that each of these particles has a multiplicity of functions, that they are not associated with one single sentence type and

that they are used by speakers of all ethnicities, although *lah* is the most widespread one, even found in educated Singapore English (Deterding, 2007: 66). *Lah* indeed is considered "the very icon of the English in Singapore and Malaysia" (Deterding, 2007: 66) and it has a wide range of functions, the most common of which is is to weaken the impact of an utterance and foster a sense of solidarity.

As for pragmatic markers of English origin, scholars have focused on their development and degree of grammaticalization and pragmaticalization. In this sense, for instance, Ziegeler (2015: 226-227) explains how the discourse marker *one* is equivalent to the sentence-final nominalizer *-de* in Mandarin Chinese. Therefore, the path followed by *one* is nominalizer-to-stance marker, which has been identified across many Chinese dialects (Yap & Matthews, 2008). Another example is *basically,* studied by Lange (2021), which exhibits a classic grammaticalization cline from predicate adverb to sentential adverb to discourse marker (Brinton, 2010: 299), also observed in the use of *already* as an aspect marker (Bao, 2015: 38; Ziegeler & Lee, 2020), providing evidence in favour of Traugott's (1995b: 15) definition of grammaticalization: "the process whereby lexical material in highly constrained pragmatic and morphosyntactic contexts becomes grammatical, and already grammatical material become[s] more grammatical" (Traugott 1995b: 15).

Pragmatic markers in PhilE have also received a great deal of attention and some of them are even claimed to be "overused" in this variety (Zuñiga-Tonio, 2021: 198), particularly in face-to-face spoken conversation, as is the case of *well*. Nevertheless, pragmatic markers also commonly found in written registers, as shown by Tan-de Ramos (2010), who studies different research papers written by students at De La Salle University, and also in computer mediated communication, as described by Palacio & Gustilo (2016), which distinguish 'relational' pragmatic markers (e.g. *OMG, Ah, hala, LOL, ugh, I mean, well*, etc.) and pragmatic markers that connect sentences (e.g. *and, now, though* and Filipino *kasi* 'because,' *at* 'and', *pero* 'but', etc.). Their findings show that Filipino youth resort more frequently to relational markers than to markers used for cohesion purposes, because the former constitute a way of maintaining interpersonal relationships (Palacio & Gustilo, 2016: 13). As was the case with SingE, PhilE includes pragmatic markers of different origins; thus, in addition to the items just mentioned, PhilE includes other markers from English (e.g. *actually* and *in fact*, see Morales, 2013; and tag questions,

see Borlongan, 2008; Westphal 2021), and from indigenous languages such as Tagalog (e.g. *ba, na*, see Borlongan, 2011), Ibalio (e.g. *pay* 'again, more, still'), Finallid (e.g. *urum* 'hopefully, maybe'), and also Ga'dang (e.g. *ara*), Ilocano (e.g. *manen*) and Central Bontoc (e.g *akhes*), the three of which mean 'go ahead, keep on going' (Walrod, 2006: 8).

Thus, SingE and PhilE exhibit a large number of pragmatic markers of multiple origins and used for different purposes, mainly in spoken interaction in order to convey solidarity or to build interpersonal relations. Interestingly enough, Madrunio (2004) focuses on the different degrees of politeness in complaint letters in these two particular varieties by paying attention to personal reference pronouns, modals, attitudinal adjectives, and passives, among other features. Her findings consistently find that SingE letters tend to be more polite and indirect, while PhilE writers "strongly exhibited their dismay over circumstances happening in their country" (Madrunio, 2004: 60). Since of the pragmatic functions of *kind of* and *sort of* is to hegde the speakers' opinion, it will be interesting to see if our findings go in the same direction as Madrunio's (2004).

CHAPTER 5. *KIND OF* AND *SORT OF* IN WORLD ENGLISHES

This chapter presents the results of our corpus-based study on the pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of* in four varieties of English, namely BrE, AmE (inner circle), SingE and PhilE (outer circle).

1. METHODOLOGY

1.1. The corpus

In order to study the presence of *kind of* and *sort of* in the varieties under analysis, a large and representative corpus of English texts is needed, as in numerous other studies on World Englishes (see, for example, Fallon, 2009; Nelson, 2009; and Bautista, 2010). For such a purpose, then, the *Corpus of Global Web-based English* (henceforth GloWbE, Davies, 2013) was chosen, because this is, in fact, one of the main corpora that are available now for the study of World Englishes (Davies & Fuchs, 2015a: 2, 25; Loureiro-Porto, 2017: 448).

The corpus was released in 2013 and contains around 1.9 billion words of texts from 1.8 million webpages (Davies, 2015; Davies & Fuchs, 2015a: 1-2, 5). This material represents 20 different varieties of English, namely those written and spoken in the following countries: USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Hong Kong, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Jamaica. Table 3 (based on Davies, 2015; Davies & Fuchs, 2015a: 6) shows the relevant data for the four varieties of the language studied in the present volume:

GloWbE, therefore, offers the advantage of its big size (Davies & Fuchs, 2015a: 2-3, 25; Mair, 2015: 29; Mukherjee, 2015: 34; Nelson, 2015: 38; Peters, 2015: 41; Loureiro-Porto, 2017: 450, 460, 468), that is, the possibility of accessing a large text bank with many illustrative examples of *kind of* and *sort of*. The fact that a corpus has a big size does not necessarily mean that it is better than others, because at times other

factors of interest are problematic, like the careful selection of materials (as mentioned by Davies & Fuchs, 2015a: 26; Mukherjee, 2015: 36; Loureiro-Porto, 2017: 450, 460, 466). The positive aspect is that it makes it possible to retrieve a large amount of information on language items, such as their syntactic environments, morphological characteristics and so on (as acknowledged by Davies & Fuchs, 2015a: 3; Mukherjee, 2015: 34; Nelson, 2015: 38; Peters, 2015: 42).

Table 3: The size of GloWbE for the USA, the UK, the Philippines and Singapore.

Country	**Websites**	**Webpages**	**Words**
USA	82,260	275,156	386,809,355
UK	64,351	381,841	387,615,074
Philippines	10,224	46,342	43,250,093
Singapore	8,339	45,459	42,974,705

The texts included in GloWbE have appeared on the Internet and date back to 2012 and 2013, so they also have the advantage of being fairly recent (Peters, 2015: 41). Their sources are informal blogs and other web-based materials, such as newspapers and magazines. The proportion allotted to informal blogs is about 60%, whereas the remaining 40% comes from general webpages, which may also include around 20% of blogs (Davies & Fuchs, 2015a: 3-4). The purpose of devoting 60% to blogs was to offer researchers a type of language that is similar to speech (Grieve et al., 2010: 320; Davies & Fuchs, 2015a: 3; Mair, 2015: 31; Loureiro-Porto, 2017: 450). Spoken material is "generally considered less stylized than written texts" (Loureiro-Porto, 2017: 455) and this aspect makes it especially valuable for the analysis of variation among English language varieties worldwide, as in this book. In the specific case of the two pragmatic markers under study, informal blogs are particularly relevant if we bear in mind the crucial informal status that they tend to possess. Likewise, Mair (2015: 31) remarks that digital writing, such as the one portrayed in GloWbE, "encourages informality," therefore the usefulness of the corpus for the analysis of *kind of* and *sort of* is clear. Another strong point of this corpus is that, according to Peters (2015: 42), GloWbE is an adequate tool to complement studies

on the historical evolution of a given language item and the process of grammaticalization that some items have undergone, which fits the study of *kind of* and *sort of* as well.

In spite of these advantages, it must be pointed out that the corpus also has some disadvantages. Thus, the 60 / 40 proportion of blogs vs. general webpages mentioned above is only an estimate, as it does not reflect the exact percentage of words in each case (see Loureiro-Porto, 2017: 455, 467). In addition, we need to take into account that blogs are not exactly equivalent to spoken language, i.e. these texts are not equivalent to transcripts of natural, spontaneous conversations (Davies & Fuchs, 2015b: 45; Peters, 2015: 42). In fact, recent studies (Loureiro-Porto, 2017: 460, 467) show that the GloWbE blogs are not too different from written material, so much so that some specific language items do not show significantly different frequencies in GloWbE-blogs, on the one hand, and GloWbE-general webpages, on the other.

It has also been stated that the type of language that is written in webpages such as those in GloWbE does not totally reflect the language that is usually spoken in the area in question because the writers resort to global language features, as well. That is, the language from webpages includes some characteristics that are used by taking into consideration a larger audience than that of a local area. This is a conscious decision in webpage writers, and this coexistence of local plus global features diminishes the value of such web-based material, since it does not wholly reflect everyday conversations in a particular area of the world (see Loureiro-Porto, 2017: 460, 467, 468) and must be considered within the context of 'glocalization' described in Chapter 1.

Another drawback that is visible in corpora relying on webpages, such as GloWbE, is that we often know little or nothing about the authors of the texts, as the Internet allows for this anonymity (as warned by Mukherjee, 2015: 35; Nelson, 2015: 39). This is the case of the examples of *kind of* and *sort of* that are transcribed in this chapter: We can analyse the syntax of the example in question and determine the element that is modified by the pragmatic marker, but we may lack information about the writer's attitude, which could have given some clues regarding the use of the marker in that case.

As already stated, the reliability of the corpus as regards the geographical origin of the texts is of special interest for this study on *kind of* and *sort of* in four different language varieties. Nevertheless, we must point

out that there is a specific drawback here: Some of the contributions to the countries' webpages correspond to citizens that were born elsewhere (Davies & Fuchs, 2015a: 26; 2015b: 46). In relation with this, let us pay attention to two cases included in the sample of texts used for this book: These texts show *kind of* in BrE and PhilE and there the pragmatic marker appears in quotes. However, these quotes reproduce the words uttered by two speakers that are not British or Philippine. In these two particular texts it is easy to notice this point because the speakers in question are famous worldwide: In the case of the British website, the speaker is Barack Obama, a former president of the USA, who says "what I will not do is to have a process that is vague, that says we're going to *sort of*, *kind of* raise revenue through dynamic scoring or closing loopholes that have not been identified." As regards the Philippine webpage, the speaker is Andy Roddick, a former world number one tennis player from the USA, as well, who says "Larry [Stefanki, his coach] had to come over and *kind of* tell me to knock it off.[5]"

Therefore, the weak points of GloWbE must be a warning not to present the data from the present analysis of *kind of* and *sort of* as definitive. Further research on the two pragmatic markers, by means of additional sources of information, would offer more consistent conclusions (see also Davies & Fuchs, 2015a: 26; 2015b: 45; Mukherjee, 2015: 34-36). Yet, GloWbE meets the requirements for this piece of research: It allows for the possibility of accessing large amounts of recent texts with *kind of* and *sort of* from the four areas of the world under examination here.

1.2. Methodological decisions

The total amount of cases showing the sequences *kind of* and *sort of* in GloWbE exceeded the limits of this study (over 320,000 tokens, as shown in Table 4), so the first step taken for the analysis of the pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of* in the corpus involved the selection of a random sample of examples.

[5] Cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andy_ Roddick (9 August, 2019).

Table 4: Total number of tokens in the corpus: raw and normalized frequencies per 100,000w.

Variety	***Kind of*** **Total number of tokens (N.F. per 100,000w)**	***Sort of*** **Total number of tokens (N.F. per 100,000w)**
AmE	111,365 (28,8)	46,363 (12,0)
BrE	85,515 (22,1)	50,607 (13,1)
PhilE	10,238 (23,7)	2,868 (6,6)
SingE	10,002 (23,3)	3,221 (7,5)
TOTAL	217,120 (25,2)	103,059 (12,0)

The number of tokens to collect was established at 800 cases of the forms *kind of* and *sort of* for each of the four varieties of English under consideration. It is important to note that the forms *kinda* and *sorta* were not included in the search criteria for this study. This omission was deliberate, as one of the primary objectives of this research is to examine the prevalence of *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers compared to their literal uses. *Kinda* and *sorta* are more commonly employed as pragmatic markers rather than in the noun + preposition structure and, therefore, their inclusion in the analysis would potentially introduce bias into the results. Thus, the inclusion of 800 random tokens for *kind of* and *sort of* for each of the four varieties under analysis yielded a final figure of 6,400 examples. This material should make it possible to reach conclusions regarding the use, frequency and degree of grammaticalization of the pragmatic markers under study in the varieties chosen[6]. The sample was easily obtained thanks to a tool that is available on the corpus interface for such a purpose (i.e. "FIND SAMPLE") and it was, therefore, a randomized selection of texts.

The following step in the work with the GloWbE data was to prune the data and manually determine which cases showed *kind of* and *sort of* in pragmatic marker uses, to isolate them from those examples that

[6] On the importance of representativeness in corpus linguistics in general and in studies on sequences with *kind of* and *sort of* in particular, see for instance Bianchi & Pazzaglia (2007: 265), De Smedt et al. (2007: 231), Renouf (2007: 32-33) or Wichmann (2007: 79).

displayed literal meanings, as in *I like this kind of bread*. Thus, Table 5 below offers the information that was obtained for each of the varieties, with the final figure of 1,323 pragmatic marker tokens:

Table 5: Number of tokens analysed in each variety: literal uses and pragmatic marker uses.

Variety	Forms	Examples	Literal uses	Pragmatic marker uses
AmE	*kind of* & *sort of*	1,600	1,188 (74.3%)	412 (25.7%)
BrE	*kind of* & *sort of*	1,600	1,398 (87.4%)	202 (12.6%)
PhilE	*kind of* & *sort of*	1,600	1,282 (80.1%)	318 (19.9%)
SingE	*kind of* & *sort of*	1,600	1,209 (75.6%)	391 (24.4%)
Total		6,400	5,077 (79.3%)	1,323 (20.7%)

The 1,323 target tokens of *kind of* and *sort of* were then entered into a database that includes the following variables, whose inter-relation is analysed in the following sections:

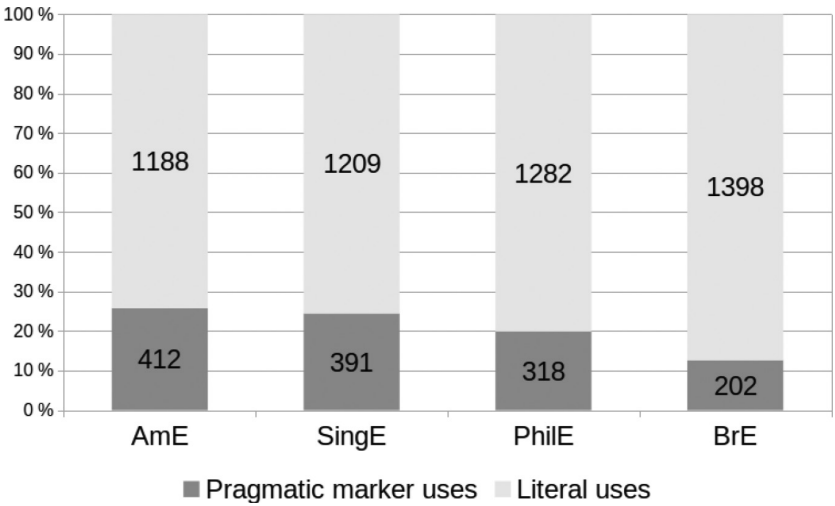
1. Form: *kind of*, *sort of*.
2. Variety: AmE, BrE, SingE, PhilE.
3. Text-type: general webpage, blog.
4. Semantics: diminisher, approximator, booster.
5. Pragmatics: stance marker, hedge.
6. Following element: adjective, adverb, verb, noun, preposition, clause of comparison, reason clause, nominal relative clause, wh-interrogative clause, zero.
7. Scope: narrow, wide.
8. Adjective meaning: emotional/non-emotional.
9. Adjective connotation: positive/negative/neutral.
10. Verb meaning: activity verb, mental activity verb, existence or relationship verb, simple occurrence verb, facilitation or causation verb, communication verb, aspectual verb.
11. Special punctuation: asterisk, inverted commas, etc.

2. GLOBAL RESULTS: OVERVIEW OF THE DATA

As seen in Table 5, *kind of* / *sort of* exhibit a much lower frequency as pragmatic markers (20.7%) than in their literal uses (79.3%), which constitutes a piece of evidence that, although grammaticalized items in the language have become more frequent than the lexical morphemes from which they derive (Bybee, 2003: 602, 605), grammaticalized items need not be used more frequently than non-grammaticalized ones necessarily (cf. Heine & Kuteva, 2007: 39), just as happens here.

The distribution of *kind of* and *sort of* in the four varieties under analysis shown in Table 5 is graphically shown in Figure 2, which ranks the varieties according to the pragmatic marker to literal use rate, that is, according to the idiomatization of *kind of* and *sort of*.

Figure 2: Ranking of varieties according to the degree of idiomatization of *kind of* and *sort of*: literal uses and pragmatic marker uses.



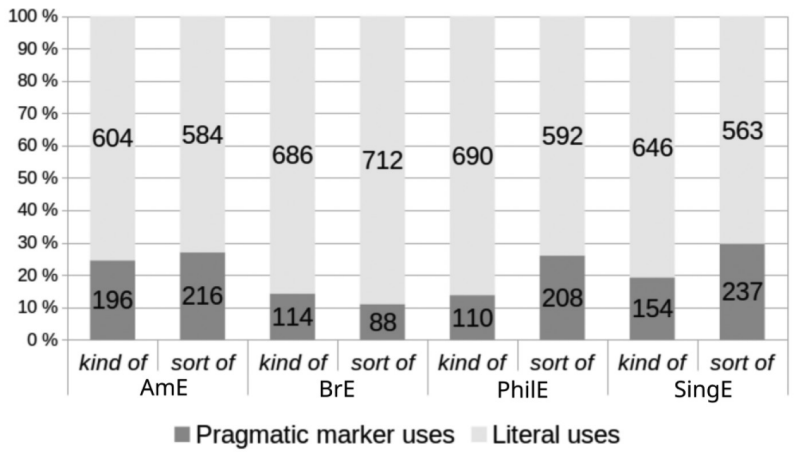
As can be seen in Figure 2, the variety that uses *kind of* and *sort of* as a whole in pragmatic marker functions most often in the sample is AmE, with 25.7% of the cases analysed for that area (i.e. 412 tokens). In marked contrast, the most conservative variety in this sense is BrE, whose display of pragmatic marker occurrences is slightly lower than half of the figure for AmE, that is 12.6% (i.e. 202 cases). This significant

difference[7], together with the fact that the two markers under focus are characteristic of informal interaction among speakers, could support a number of specific observations from the relevant literature positing a link between AmE and informal style (e.g. Quirk et al., 1985: 447, note, 662,1106, note a, 1111, note b; Kövecses 2000: 235 ff.).

In Figure 2 we can also observe that SingE ranks second in the proportion of occurrences for *kind of* and *sort of* in pragmatic marker functions (i.e. 24.4%, with 391 examples) and PhilE ranks third (i.e. 19.9%, with 318 examples). With the chi-square test support here, we can highlight the fact that neither of these two varieties uses the markers as abundantly as AmE does in the sample (although the figure for SingE is not far), but they surpass a native variety from the inner circle in this respect (BrE).

Table 6 and Figure 3 itemize the uses of *kind of* and *sort of* separately across the four varieties chosen:

Figure 3: Uses of *kind of* and *sort of* in AmE, BrE, PhilE and SingE.



[7] The chi-square statistic is 102.7936. The p-value is < 0.00001. The result is significant at p < .05 (cf. socscistatistics.com; 18 November, 2018). On the usefulness of the chi-square test for studies on corpus linguistics and World Englishes, see Oakes & Farrow (2007), Peters (2008: 157), Gries (2010: 16-18), Bowie et al. (2013) or Baker (2017: 5).

Table 6: Uses of *kind of* and *sort of* separately in AmE, BrE, PhilE and SingE.

Variety	Form	Examples	Literal uses	Pragmatic marker uses	Total PMs per variety	Total PMs per circle
AmE	*kind of*	800	604 (75.5%)	196 (24.5%)	412	614
	sort of	800	584 (73.0%)	216 (27.0%)		
BrE	*kind of*	800	686 (85.8%)	114 (14.2%)	202	
	sort of	800	712 (89.0%)	88 (11.0%)		
PhilE	*kind of*	800	690 (86.3%)	110 (13.7%)	318	709
	sort of	800	592 (74.0%)	208 (26.0%)		
SingE	*kind of*	800	646 (80.8%)	154 (19.2%)	391	
	sort of	800	563 (70.4%)	237 (29.6%)		
Total		**6,400**	**5,077 (79.3%)**	**1,323 (20.7%)**	**1,323**	**1,323**

Some aspects that can be highlighted about the data in Table 6 and Figure 3:

- The choice of *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers is dependent upon the area of the world included in the sample[8]. So, AmE and BrE choose the two markers at similar frequency rates, whereas PhilE and SingE favour *sort of* significantly.
- As regards AmE some works identify *kind of* as characteristic of this variety, whereas *sort of* is associated with BrE (see Quirk et al., 1985: 598; Biber et al., 1999: 867; Miskovic-Lukovic, 2009:

[8] The chi-square statistic is 29.5057. The p-value is < 0.00001. The result is significant at $p < .05$ (cf. socscistatistics.com; 17 November, 2018).

619-620; Crystal, 2012: 150). However, the data indicate that the pragmatic marker to literal use rate (i.e. its degree of idiomatization) is higher for *sort of* than for *kind of* in the sample.

- Regarding BrE, the pragmatic marker to literal use rate is higher for *kind of* than for *sort of* in the sample, though the percentages of use of the two pragmatic markers are quite similar (i.e. 14.2% vs. 11.0%).
- The percentages of occurrence of *kind of* and *sort of* in the BrE sample are two of the three lowest percentages overall. BrE *sort of* is the least common pragmatic marker in Table 6 above (i.e. 11.0%; cf. also Figure 3), PhilE *kind of* is the second less used item (13.7%) and BrE *kind of* ranks third on this list (14.2%).
- In PhilE *sort of* has a higher rate of pragmatic marker to literal use (i.e. 26.0% of cases, vs. 13.7% for *kind of*).
- If we compare the data of the sample for AmE and PhilE, there are reasons to think that there may be an influence of the former on the latter in the use of pragmatic markers: In both varieties *sort of* has a higher rate of pragmatic marker uses than *kind of*, and the figures are very similar, with 216 occurrences in AmE (27.0% of cases) and 208 occurrences in PhilE (26.0% of cases). This state of affairs is in keeping with the traditional consideration that superstrate languages have an important influence on the new varieties of English, which can be attested in various language items. In this case, there can plausibly be an illustration of this phenomenon in the specific distribution of *sort of.*
- In SingE the pragmatic marker to literal use rate is higher for *sort of* than for *kind of* (29.6% of cases for the former and 19.2% for the latter).

After these preliminary results, it is fitting to explore the distribution of our pragmatic markers across the two text-types included in GloWbE, namely blogs and general webpages, because *kind of* and *sort of* are characteristic of informal interaction and conversation and blogs are included in GloWbE as similar to speech (cf. Grieve et al., 2010: 320; Davies & Fuchs, 2015a: 3; Mair, 2015: 31). Table 7 and Figure 4 show the results from our study.

In Table 7 and Figure 4 we can see that both *kind of* and *sort of* are considerably more common in general webpages than in blogs in the

present sample in all varieties. Taking into account that blogs are considered to represent 60% of all the texts in GloWbE (see section 1.1 in this Chapter), this result is unexpected, because the rate of occurrence of our pragmatic markers ranges between 24.1% (*sort of* in SingE) and 49.1% (*kind of* in PhilE). In addition, since these pragmatic markers are highly conversational, this finding also puts into question the claim that the blogs included in GloWbE are more informal than the general webpages (as also highlighed by Loureiro-Porto, 2017: 460, 467). Here are indeed two cases of *kind of* and *sort of* taken from general webpages in GloWbE that show clear traits of informality. They belong to AmE and SingE, respectively:

(73) *I reallllllly want the surface but I do find it* ***kind of*** *funny that this original comment looks like those Samsung commercials saying' It'll be on the next one.';) hehe two-way street ain't it.* (from extremetech.com)

(74) *I've never been a huge fan of Gwok Seung. She seemed to deliberatley designed to be a " Miss Perfect, " as if Jin Yong were overcompensating for making Gwok Fu such a b*tch. The result, however, was a character that seemed to try too hard to be lovable, and consequently seemed* ***sort of*** *ungenuine. Gwok Fu might have been a b*tch, but at least she was a more believable character.* (from spcnet.tv)

Therefore, our findings support Loureiro-Porto's (2017: 455-460) results that show that oral and informal features that are typical of spoken texts are indeed more frequent in general webpages than in blogs, which questions the alleged differences between the language used in blogs and in other, more general websites,

A last preliminary comment on the general behaviour of the two pragmatic markers in the corpus concerns their ability to co-occur in the same context. In the present sample there are 185 texts that encompass two or more occurrences of the pragmatic markers in the same context (with a maximum distance of 60 words between the two markers), as in example (75), which means 14% of the total 1,323 examples under analysis.

Table 7: Distribution of *kind of* and *sort of* across Blogs and General in the four varieties.

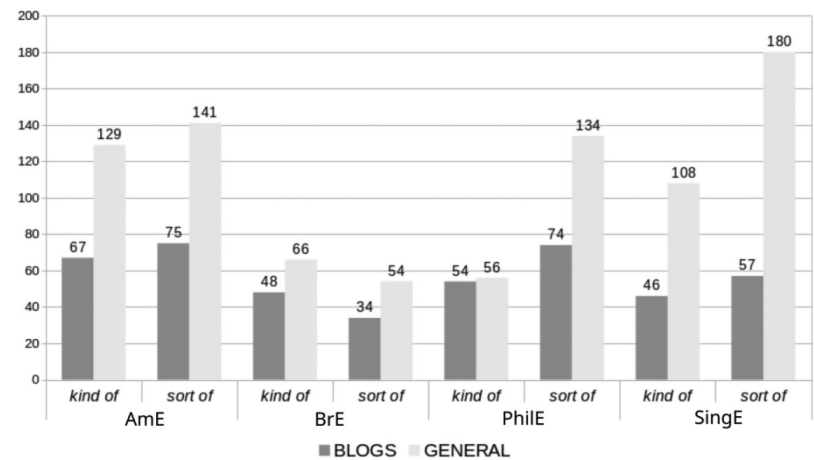
	Pragmatic marker	**Blogs**	**General**	**Total**
AmE	*kind of*	67 (34.2%)	129 (65.8%)	196
	sort of	75 (34.7%)	141 (65.3%)	216
BrE	*kind of*	48 (42.1%)	66 (57.9%)	114
	sort of	34 (38.6%)	54 (61.4%)	88
PhilE	*kind of*	54 (49.1%)	56 (50.9%)	110
	sort of	74 (35.6%)	134 (64.4%)	208
SingE	*kind of*	46 (29.9%)	108 (70.1%)	154
	sort of	57 (24.1%)	180 (75.9%)	237
	Total	455 (34.4%)	868 (65.6%)	1,323

(75) *I **sort of** felt like near the end she was just getting pulled along by Jin-soo and because she didn't really say much I was unsure of what her feelings were, until the last few scenes when it shows them together. I remember the Eunyoung from like the very first episodes even, when she was very energetic and opinionated whereas, here, I was **kind of** lost on what she was thinking.* (from dramabeans.com – SingE)

In 129 out of the 185 cases just mentioned, the speaker in question retains the pragmatic marker that they had used first (i.e. 69.7% of the cases). Conversely, in 56 examples the speaker alternates between *kind of* and *sort of* (i.e. 30.3% of the cases, as shown under (75) above). If we pay attention to the distribution of the relevant examples across varieties, the percentages of retention of pragmatic markers vs. alternation between them are the following: AmE – 69.2% vs. 30.8%; BrE – 75.0% vs. 25.0%:

PhilE – 77.8% vs. 22.2%; SingE – 61.4% vs. 38.6%. This shows that the speakers that most frequently retain the same pragmatic marker within the same context are those from the Philippines and the UK in the sample, while the speakers that alternate between *kind of* and *sort of* most often are those from Singapore and the USA. There is an obvious connection between alternation of pragmatic markers and relative proportion of *sort of* within the corpus, since AmE and SingE are the varieties with a higher number of *sort of* in the sample (cf. Table 6 and Figure 3), which makes it more likely to be combined with *kind of* in some examples.

Figure 4: Distribution of *kind of* and *sort of* across Blogs and General in the four varieties.



In addition, not all the cases in which there are two or more instances of *kind of* and *sort of* are cases of their use as pragmatic markers. Conversely, it is also possible to find *kind of* and *sort of* being used as both pragmatic markers and also in their literal use, meaning 'class of,' in the same context (with a maximum distance of 60 words) as in (76):

(76) *Prescott allegedly acknowledged to his employer that he should not be making these statements over the phone, saying, "It's* ***kind of*** *foolish of me to say this* ***kind of*** *things [sic] over government phone."* (from abcnews.go.com – AmE, [sic] in original)

There are 101 examples such as (76) in our dataset, which means 7.6% of the 1,323 cases of the pragmatic markers recorded. The fact that the two functions of *kind of* and *sort of* (i.e. pragmatic marker use and literal use) can appear within a very short distance (maximum 60 words) is indicative of the degree of grammaticalization that *kind of* and *sort of* have come to acquire. As already noted, once the expressions *kind of* and *sort of* began to be used as pragmatic markers, the original lexical forms (the nouns *kind* and *sort*) continued to be used and are still alive today, where they retain their status as autonomous lexical items. This process is referred to as *divergence* in works on grammaticalization (cf. Hopper & Traugott, 2003: 118) and sentence (76) is just an example of it.

3. SYNTACTIC POSITION OF *KIND OF* AND *SORT OF* IN THE CORPUS

The pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of* can precede and modify words (e.g. an adjective), phrases (e.g. a noun phrase) and clauses (e.g. a clause of comparison), and they can stand alone, as well. When they qualify the meaning of the word that follows them, as in (77), they are said to have a narrow scope:

(77) *I* ***sort of*** *saw his point*. (Denison, 2002: 3)

In contrast to these syntactic environments, there is a situation where the two pragmatic markers have a wide scope (Fetzer, 2009: 130), namely when *kind of* and *sort of* modify not a word or a phrase but a whole clause or sentence. This can be seen when the two markers precede a clause of comparison, a reason clause, a nominal relative clause and a *wh*-interrogative clause, and also when they stand alone. It is for this reason that Bolinger (1972: 113), among others, proposes the term *sentence adverb* to specify this function of the two elements, as in the following example (cf. the related label sentence adverbial in Quirk et al., 1985: 52):

(78) *It's a telescope,* ***sort of.*** (Bolinger, 1972: 113)

In (78) the word order is not *It's sort of a telescope* (i.e. *sort of* + noun phrase), since the pragmatic marker has shifted its position towards the

end of the sentence. This way, it has adopted a more detached role in the sentence and has come to modify all of the preceding information, i.e. the clause built by the words *It's a telescope* (cf. a similar analysis in Aijmer, 2002: 186; and Holmes, 1988: 88, 94).

For similar considerations, De Smedt et al. (2007: 246) conclude that, when each of the two pragmatic markers occurs in this position, it "frames whole predications." In the same vein, they state that, in this use, *kind of* and *sort of* have scope "over a whole proposition" and qualify "the truth or accuracy of that proposition," hence the term *sentential qualifier* that they apply to them. There is a similar analysis in Brems (2011: 114), who adds that *kind of* and *sort of* act like the adverbs *perhaps* or *largely* in this function (2011: 316).

The vast majority of the examples in our dataset have a narrow scope (namely 91% for AmE, 92.6% for BrE, 92.8% for PhilE and 94.4% for SingE). Nonetheless, our markers can also be found with a wide scope, as in (79) and (80):

Table 8: Distribution of *kind of* and *sort of* across syntactic constructions.

Syntactic construction	**AmE**	**BrE**	**PhilE**	**SingE**	**Total**
kind of + adjective	55	30	37	54	176
sort of + adjective	41	15	20	41	117
Sub-total	96	45	57	95	293 (22.3%)
kind of + adverb	1	0	2	0	3
sort of + adverb	5	0	3	3	11
Sub-total	6	0	5	3	14 (1.1%)
kind of + verb	78	50	50	69	247
sort of + verb	87	41	97	126	351
Sub-total	165	91	147	195	598 (45.4%)
kind of + noun phrase	34	19	12	9	74
sort of + noun phrase	37	14	48	27	126
Sub-total	71	33	60	36	200 (15.2%)
kind of + prepositional phrase	17	8	4	15	44

Syntactic construction	AmE	BrE	PhilE	SingE	Total
sort of + prepositional phrase	19	10	23	24	76
Sub-total	36	18	27	39	120 (9.1%)
kind of + clause of comparison	1	1	1	2	5
sort of + clause of comparison	4	0	4	2	10
Sub-total	5	1	5	4	15 (1.1%)
kind of + reason clause	0	0	0	0	0
sort of + reason clause	0	1	1	0	2
Sub-total	0	1	1	0	2 (0.1%)
kind of + nominal relative clause	5	3	1	2	11
sort of + nominal relative clause	5	2	1	2	10
Sub-total	10	5	2	4	21 (1.6%)
kind of + *wh*-interrogative clause	1	0	0	0	1
sort of + *wh*-interrogative clause	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-total	1	0	0	0	1 (0.1%)
kind of standing alone	4	2	3	1	10
sort of standing alone	14	5	11	12	42
Sub-total	18	7	14	13	52 (4.0%)
TOTAL	**408**	**201**	**318**	**389**	**1,316**

(79) *I would just cut your conduit the exact width between the shelves so when you hang it the ends touch the shelving. When you hang your curtains, just have the curtains go all the way to the end of the curtain rod so they are touching the shelving.* ***Kind of*** *like how you would hang a tension curtain rod.* (from houseofhepworths.com – AmE)

(80) *How it impacted me is there'd be a scene that they'd write, for example, there was a police line-up in MIB HQ, and it was a bunch of strange alien silhouettes and Will Smith. It was* ***sort of*** *how Will first appeared in the HQ in one of the early scripts.* (from fmoviemag.com – SingE)

The very low proportion of *kind of* and *sort of* with a wide scope is also seen in Table 8, which shows the distribution of these markers across all the syntactic constructions in which they are recorded in our dataset. Several comments are in order regarding Table 8:

- The total figures comprised in the last row miss seven examples from the total of 1,323. The reason is that in those cases *kind of* and *sort of* precede a quote, such as (81), which falls out of our syntactic analysis:

(81) *Her teachers at Rada told Maxine to go on a diet, but it was Victoria Wood, creator and co-star on her first major TV series, the BBC sitcom Dinnerladies, who finally persuaded her to shift an impressive five stone. "Victoria did it in a better way than they did at drama school," she says. "I was told by one teacher, 'If you don't lay off the chips you'll never play Juliet' and I was* ***kind of****, 'Juliet? She's a wimp anyway'. Victoria said, 'Look, you're big, you're northern, it's going to be funny roles... it's going to be really difficult for you'. Anyway, I did WeightWatchers...* (from independent.co.uk – BrE)

- The syntactic construction that exhibits the highest frequency is that in which *kind of* and *sort of* precede verbs (45.4%), following by adjectives (22.3%), noun phrase (15.2%), prepositional phrase (9.1%), standing alone (4%), nominal relative clause (1.6%), clause of comparison (1.1%), adverb (1.1%), reason clause (0.1%) and *wh*-interrogative clause (0.1%). Interestingly, the differences between *kind of* and *sort of* regarding the four most frequent syntactic positions (verbs, adjectives, noun phrases and prepositional phrases) are not significant in inner circle varieties, but are indeed

significant in the outer circle.[9] This sharp contrast between AmE and BrE, on the one hand, and PhilE and SingE, on the other, brings to the fore the relevance of postcolonial pragmatics, since the postcolonial varieties studied here do exhibit significant syntactic differences between *kind of* and *sort of*.

- Table 8 also shows that *sort of* is overall preferred in all syntactic environments, except with adjectives, clauses of comparison and, to a much lesser extent, *wh*-interrogative clauses. The overall differences between the two markers in their four most frequent combinations (verb / adjective / noun phrase / prepositional phrase and *kind of* / *sort of* standing alone) is significant[10], which proves that although the two expressions share many characteristics, as is seen repeatedly in this book, in certain specific aspects of syntax they do not behave exactly in the same way. In addition, as just seen in the previous paragraph, the overall differences between *kind of* and *sort of* are conditioned by the differences in the outer circle varieties, since they are not syntactically different in the inner circle varieties analysed here.

The following sections pay closer attention to the combination of *kind of* and *sort of* with verbs and adjectives because there lie their main pragmatic features.

3.1. *Kind of* and *sort of* + verb

This section studies the behaviour of *kind of* and *sort of* when followed by a verb paying particular attention to the semantics of the verb. According to Biber et al. (1999: 358-364, 380-381, 403; see also Quirk et al., 1985: 53-54, 96, 137, 586; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 74-75, 92, 263-266), verbs can be classified semantically as: activity verbs (e.g.

[9] The chi-square statistic for each variety is the following: AmE, 2.7704 (the p-value is .428388 and the result is not significant at $p < .05$); BrE, 3.0348 (the p-value is .386294 and the result is not significant at $p < .05$; PhilE, 33.0603 (the p-value is < 0.00001 and the result is significant at $p < .05$); SingE, 16.3241 (the p-value is .000973 and the result is significant at $p < .05$; (socscistatistics.com, 4 October 2023).

[10] The chi-square statistic is 38.7187. The p-value is < 0.00001. The result is significant at $p < .05$ (socscistatistics.com, 4 October 2023)

move), communication verbs (*say*), mental verbs (*think*), verbs of facilitation or causation (*permit*), verbs of simple occurrence (*change*), verbs of existence or relationship (*seem*), aspectual verbs (*stop*), gradable verbs (*like*) and non-gradable verbs (*smile*). All these types of verbs are found in our corpus combined with *kind of* and *sort of*, as seen in (82)-(88) below:

(82) *Now, Twitter has **sort of** come and gone.* (from incomediary.com – AmE) [→ activity verb]
(83) *I can **kind of** understand what you mean by the community being ready.* (from otakultura.com – PhilE) [→ mental activity verb]
(84) *they have no particular racial background, it would seem, they **sort of** represent the "every brown person Other" culture,* (from denofgeek.com – BrE) [→ existence or relationship verb]
(85) *Everyone just **kind of** became friends with him afterwards.* (from wonderrrgirl.wordpress.com – SingE) [→ simple occurrence verb]
(86) *I'm just the messenger. Even if I did **sort of** cause it*. (from chercabulasmindbox.com – PhilE) [→ facilitation or causation verb]
(87) *You could **kind of** say he had it coming*. (from thebustard.com – BrE) [→ communication verb]
(88) *This **sort of** follows my points from last night*. (from yankees.lhblogs.com – AmE) [→ aspectual verb]

Because these seven semantic classes of verbs allow, in principle, for pragmatic differences regarding the use of hedging devices, we have explored their distribution in our dataset, which is shown in Table 9 (verb types ranked by frequency in the corpus).

Several comments are in order regarding Table 9:

- The overall choice of *kind of* and *sort of* is not determined by the semantic type of verb, as the chi-square test shows when we consider the overall frequency of *kind of* and *sort of* followed by the five most frequent semantic types of verbs[11].
- As regards the distribution of verbs with *kind of* and *sort of* separately, the two pragmatic markers show similar preferences. Thus,

[11] The chi-square statistic is 5.1865. The p-value is .268688. The result is not significant at $p < .05$ (cf. socscistatistics.com; 5 March, 2019).

for example, both *kind of* and *sort of* are most often followed by verbs expressing activity (31.5% and 30.1% of cases, respectively), with mental activity verbs in the second place and existence or relationship verbs in the third place in both cases. The three semantic types of verbs just mentioned retain their positions in the inner and in the outer circle texts, as well.

Table 9: Semantic types of verbs modified by *kind of* and *sort of*.

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**Tot.**
kind of & *sort of* (comb.)	179 *30.7%*	146 *25.1%*	98 *16.8%*	55 *9.4%*	42 *7.2%*	39 *6.7%*	24 *4.1%*	583
kind of (all var.)	75 *31.5%*	70 *29.4%*	36 *15.1%*	18 *7.6%*	17 *7.1%*	15 *6.3%*	7 *3.0%*	238
sort of (all var.)	104 *30.1%*	76 *22.0%*	62 *18.0%*	37 *10.7%*	25 *7.3%*	24 *7.0%*	17 *4.9%*	345
AmE	59 *36.4%*	38 *23.5%*	30 *18.5%*	5 *3.1%*	8 *4.9%*	10 *6.2%*	12 *7.4%*	162
BrE	23 *26.1%*	21 *23.9%*	15 *17.0%*	11 *12.5%*	7 *8.0%*	8 *9.1%*	3 *3.4%*	88
PhilE	47 *33.1%*	33 *23.2%*	21 *14.8%*	15 *10.6%*	9 *6.3%*	14 *9.9%*	3 *2.1%*	142
SingE	50 *26.2%*	54 *28.3%*	32 *16.7%*	24 *12.6%*	18 *9.4%*	7 *3.7%*	6 *3.1%*	191
Inner circle var.	82 *32.8%*	59 *23.6%*	45 *18.0%*	16 *6.4%*	15 *6.0%*	18 *7.2%*	15 *6.0%*	250
Outer circle var.	97 *29.2%*	87 *26.1%*	53 *15.9%*	39 *11.7%*	27 *8.1%*	21 *6.3%*	9 *2.7%*	333

Key:
1. Activity verb
2. Mental activity verb
3. Existence or relationship verb
4. Simple occurrence verb
5. Facilitation or causation verb
6. Communication verb
7. Aspectual verb

- If the four varieties are paired in order to find similaries and differences between them as for the semantic types of verb that follow the pragmatic markers, the findings are revealing. There are no significant differences between AmE and PhilE regarding the frequency of the five most frequent semantic classes of verbs,[12] which can be understood as a result of the fact that PhilE is a postcolonial variety whose matrilect is AmE, as seen above. The same applies to the comparison between BrE, on the one hand, and SingE,[13] on the other, which can be seen as an indicator of a strong influence from the matrilect. The differences between the two inner circle varieties are, however, significant,[14] while the differences between PhilE and SingE are not.[15] Therefore, we find again another piece of evidence that postcolonial varieties diverge from inner circle varieties, in what constitutes another claim in favour of the framework described by postcolonial pragmatics.
- Regarding the frequency of semantic verb types after *kind of* / *sort of*, it is not strange to find activity verbs in the top position after the pragmatic markers in the sample given their high frequency of occurrence in the language in general. In fact, such items are the most frequent ones in conversation, fiction, news and academic prose in Biber et al. (1999: 366).
- The next three verb types that follow activity ones as regards frequency in Biber et al. (1999: 366) are communication, mental activity and existence or relationship[16]. In our sample, mental activity verbs rank second after *kind of* / *sort of*, and existence or

[12] The chi-square statistic is 7.5327. The p-value is .110274. The result is not significant at $p < .05$ (socscistatistics.com; 4 October, 2023).

[13] The chi-square statistic is 0.3794. The p-value is .984128. The result is not significant at $p < .05$ (socscistatistics.com; 4 October, 2023).

[14] The chi-square statistic is 10.6251. The p-value is .031117. The result is significant at $p < .05$ (socscistatistics.com; 4 October, 2023).

[15] The chi-square statistic is 3.3537. The p-value is .500473. The result is not significant at $p < .05$ (socscistatistics.com; 4 October, 2023).

[16] In conversation, the order is mental > existence > communication; in fiction, the order is mental > existence > communication; in news, the order is existence > communication > mental; in academic prose, the order is existence > mental > communication (see Biber et al., 1999: 366).

relationship verbs rank third. Therefore, in this specific aspect too, the data from GloWbE are not puzzling. In the particular case of communication verbs, they rank sixth after *kind of* / *sort of* here, unlike in Biber et al. (1999).

- Finally, three of the four least frequent verb types after *kind of* / *sort of* in the sample (i.e. simple occurrence / facilitation or causation / aspectual) are the three least frequent ones in Biber et al. (1999: 366), with similar data there. Consequently, in this aspect the GloWbE data are expected.

3.2. *Kind of* and *sort of* + adjective

Kind of and *sort of* can be used with different types of adjectives. Quirk et al. (1985: 434 ff.) distinguish subtypes of adjectives such as stative vs. dynamic, gradable vs. non-gradable, and inherent vs. non-inherent. The majority of examples in our corpus (99.7%) use central, prototypical adjectives that are dynamic, gradable, and inherent, as seen in (89)-(92):

(89) *the concept is **kind of** similar.* (from thesixthaxis.com – BrE)
(90) *I am **sort of** new to this so be patient!* (from wordpress.org – AmE)
(91) *I am **kind of** clumsy*. (from entertainment.inquirer.net – PhilE)
(92) *I'm **sort of** happy to let these characters own up to their mistakes,* (from dramabeans.com – SingE)

Given this overwhelming preference for central adjectives after *kind of* and *sort of*, we hypothesized that more important than their prototypicality is their ability to describe emotional states, since these markers can acquire an important role in the transmission of personal experiences, feelings and attitudes in conversations (see Aijmer, 1984: 123). For this reason, we explored this path in our dataset and found, as Table 10 shows, that the majority of the adjectives following *kind of* and *sort of* do not describe emotional states in any of the varieties. In fact, the similarities between the varieties are so strong that no significant differences have been found in any possible pairing, namely when the four varieties are

contrasted with one another,[17] and also when they are paired as AmE-BrE, AmE-PhilE, AmE-SingE, BrE-PhilE, BrE-SingE, and PhilE-SingE.[18]

Table 10: Adjectives describing emotional states after *kind of* and *sort of*.

	Adjectives describing emotional states	**Adjectives not describing emotional states**	**Total**
kind of & *sort of* (combined)	71 (24.2%)	222 (75.8%)	293
kind of (all varieties)	40 (22.7%)	136 (77.3%)	176
sort of (all varieties)	31 (26.5%)	86 (73.5%)	117
AmE	26 (27.1%)	70 (72.9%)	96
BrE	7 (15.6%)	38 (84.4%)	45
PhilE	15 (26.3%)	42 (73.7%)	57
SingE	23 (24.2%)	72 (75.8%)	95
Inner circle varieties	33 (23.4%)	108 (76.6%)	141
Outer circle varieties	38 (25.0%)	114 (75.0%)	152

[17] The chi-square statistic is 0.5436. The p-value is .460944. The result is not significant at $p < .05$ (socscistatistics.com; 4 October, 2023).

[18] The chi-square statistic for each pair is the following: AmE-BrE, 2.2712 (the p-value is .131797 and the result is not significant at $p < .05$); AmE-PhilE, 0.0107 (the p-value is .917456 and the result is not significant at $p < .05$); AmE-SingE, 0.2066 (the p-value is .649436 and the result is not significant at $p < .05$); BrE-PhilE, 1.7211 (the p-value is .189545 and he result is not significant at $p < .05$); BrE-SingE, 1.3586 (the p-value is .243786 and the result is not significant at $p < .05$); and PhilE-SingE, 0.0842 (the p-value is .771671 and the result is not significant at $p < .05$) (socscistatistics.com; 4 October, 2023).

Another avenue we explored was the connotations of the adjectives that follow *kind of* and *sort of*, which may be positive (e.g. (93)), neutral (e.g. (94)) or negative (e.g. (95)):

(93) *I always try to have something like this when I travel because it a little piece of happiness here and there really makes for an entire trip. It's* ***kind of*** *cool to have it by my bedside where I know my earrings and necklace will be safe.* (from pinklavenders.com – SingE)

(94) *It was* ***kind of*** *similar to the Ferrero Tronky I reviewed a while back, but without the nuttiness*. (from thesnackreview.com – BrE)

(95) *Davis said he was "very nervous" while watching the lottery, not so much because he was concerned which team would wind up with the top pick, but because seeing the whole process unfold in front of your eyes can be* ***sort of*** *nerve-wracking*. (from watchbullsnbaonline.com – PhilE)

Table 11 shows that *kind of* and *sort of* modify more adjectives with negative meanings (48.1%) than adjectives with positive (28.9%) or neutral nuances (17.8%), which goes against Gries & David (2007), who argue that *kind of* and *sort of* are usually accompanied by inherently positive adjectives in their sample, as in *kind of fun* or *sort of good*. The only variety in which our results get closer to theirs is BrE, which favours neutral adjectives and which is significantly disimilar from all other varieties.[19] In the remainder of our dataset, however, negative adjectives are indeed the most frequent ones, as can be seen in rows 5-8 in Table 11 (i.e. AmE, PhilE and SingE), with similar percentages of use (from 49.0% to 55.8%) which show no significant differences among varieties. These adjectives also take the lead both in the inner and in the outer circle (see the last two rows in Table 11), but they are more common in the outer circle (53.3% of cases).

[19] When BrE is paired with AmE, the chi-square statistic is 9.4689 (the p-value is .008787 and the result is significant at $p < .05$). When BrE is paired with PhilE, the chi-square statistic is 6.1769 (the p-value is .045572 and the result is significant at $p < .05$). Finally, when BrE is paired with SingE, the chi-square statistic is 18.7606 (the p-value is .000084 and the result is significant at $p < .05$) (socscistatistics.com; 4 October, 2023).

Table 11: Adjectives with positive, neutral and negative meanings after *kind of* and *sort of*.

	Positive meanings	**Neutral meanings**	**Negative meanings**	**Total**
kind of & *sort of* (combined)	83 (28.3%)	69 (23.6%)	141 (48.1%)	293
kind of (all varieties)	42 (23.9%)	40 (22.7%)	94 (53.4%)	176
sort of (all varieties)	41 (35.0%)	29 (24.8%)	47 (40.2%)	117
AmE	28 (29.1%)	21 (21.9%)	47 (49.0%)	96
BrE	11 (24.4%)	21 (46.7%)	13 (28.9%)	45
PhilE	15 (26.3%)	14 (24.6%)	28 (49.1%)	57
SingE	29 (30.5%)	13 (13.7%)	53 (55.8%)	95
Inner circle varieties	39 (27.7%)	42 (29.8%)	60 (42.5%)	141
Outer circle varieties	44 (28.9%)	27 (17.8%)	81 (53.3%)	152

In order to provide a full description of the use of *kind of* and *sort of* with negative adjectives, Table 12 breaks down the data taking into account the semantic functions of *kind of* and *sort of*. Table 12 shows that adjectives conveying negative meanings are usually accompanied by *kind of* and *sort of* when the two markers fulfil their role as diminishers (79.2% of cases). As seen above, such a diminisher function can be noticed when speakers wish to reduce the impact of an utterance not to sound too abrupt. It is not strange, therefore, to find that the impact of negative adjectives is hedged by speakers by inserting *kind of* and *sort of* in front of them. If we examine the figures included in the second column of Table 12, we will see that the association that can be established between a negative adjective and a pragmatic marker as a diminisher is very strong in each of the two markers, in each of the four varieties and in each of the two circles under consideration here. Therefore, the hedging nature of *kind of* and *sort of* serves a pragmatic function related to politeness. Such and other pragmatic functions are analysed in the next section.

Table 12: Negative adjectives as related to the semantic values of *kind of* and *sort of*.

	Diminisher value	**Approximator value**	**Booster value**	**Total**
kind of & *sort of* (combined)	114 (79.2%)	11 (7.6%)	19 (13.2%)	144
kind of (all varieties)	74 (78.7%)	6 (6.4%)	14 (14.9%)	94
sort of (all varieties)	40 (80.0%)	5 (10.0%)	5 (10.0%)	50
AmE	41 (85.4%)	3 (6.3%)	4 (8.3%)	48
BrE	12 (92.3%)	1 (7.7%)	0 (0.0%)	13
PhilE	22 (78.6%)	3 (10.7%)	3 (10.7%)	28
SingE	39 (70.9%)	4 (7.3%)	12 (21.8%)	55
Inner circle varieties	53 (86.8%)	4 (6.6%)	4 (6.6%)	61
Outer circle varieties	61 (73.5%)	7 (8.44%)	15 (18.1%)	83

4. SEMANTIC AND PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF *KIND OF* AND *SORT OF* IN THE CORPUS

This section explores the semantic characteristics of *kind of* and *sort of* in our dataset and analyses a number of pragmatic features shown by the two markers that have an intimate connection with their semantic traits.

4.1. The semantic values of *kind of* and *sort of*

As already noted, *kind of* and *sort of* can act as diminishers, approximators or boosters depending on the context.[20] Thus, our corpus records examples of these markers with a diminisher meaning, as seen in (96) and (97):

[20] It must be clarified that in cases of ambiguity, different native speakers were consulted in order to determine the specific prevailing nuance of the pragmatic markers in each example. Their help is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

(96) *The one foreign language that has become **sort of** popular recently is Chinese. But I think that this is mostly a fad and that only a tiny fraction of people who start learning Chinese will become fluent in it because it is so difficult to learn.* (from patenttranslator.wordpress.com – AmE)

(97) *Packaging, Accessories and Build Quality You can easy tell AM90 is from China when you see the brown paper box with foam inlay - **kind of** rustic, but not in a bad way as it keeps the price down for what essentially a budget IEM.* (from inearmatters.net – SingE)

In example (96) *sort of* is used to diminish the intensity of the adjective *popular*: The writer states that Chinese has become popular but does not want to say that it has become very or extremely popular. The same applies to sentence (97), in which the adjective *rustic* is diminished by means of the use of *kind of*.

Two corpus examples of *kind of* and *sort of* with an approximator function are (98) and (99):

(98) *I've been watching Cricket on ESPN3. It's **kind of** like hockey, except it's mostly East Asians, they don't wear skates, and they throw a little ball at a wicket while some guys tries to hit it, and games tend to go on for hours and hours with hundreds of points scored, and nobody fights.* (from slog.thestranger.com – AmE)

(99) *Aside from the sandwiches, The Appraisery also serves REALLY good desserts. Love their macarons and this red velvet thing that's **sort of** like a cross between a brownie and a cookie.* (from fashioneggplant.com – PhilE)

In these two examples the pragmatic markers are used as approximators regarding the preposition *like*: In example (98) there is a comparison between two sports, cricket and hockey, although the writer acknowledges that the former is not exactly like the latter. Indeed, by means of the introduction of *kind of* before *like*, the idea of the comparison is only approximate. Regarding example (99), the presence of *sort of* in front of the preposition *like* serves to introduce an idea of approximation in the sentence: The food described here is not exactly like a cross between

a brownie and a cookie but something that could more or less bear a resemblance to this. As mentioned above, *kind of* and *sort of* often act as approximators when speakers cannot think of the *mot juste* to refer to something, and this is exactly the case of these two examples.

Finally, sentences (100) and (101) illustrate the use of *kind of* and *sort of* as boosters:

(100) *This sounds incredible, I've been meaning to try their pizzas for so long! Aside from the whole Olympics thing and all the tourists, this* ***kind of*** *makes me wish I was still living in East London this Summer!* (from thelondoner.me – BrE)

(101) *So, once he jumps off the roof he's actually returning to his own time because he's standing on the roof watching himself jump.* ***Sort of*** *bakes my noodle to think about it. lol* (from dramabeans.com – SingE)

In example (100) the writer does not want to mitigate the force of the verb that is modified by *kind of*, namely *makes*. On the contrary, the purpose of the pragmatic marker here is to insert a component of emotional emphasis in its context, which is reinforced by the use of an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence. Example (101) is similar: There is a considerable load of emotional involvement and emphasis here, which can be perceived in the use of the expressions *bakes my noodle* (meaning 'confuses me' or 'disturbs me') and *lol* (for 'laughing out loud'), and the introduction of *sort of* adds to this emotional tone.

This threefold semantic classification does not always apply neatly to the examples in our dataset. Thus, there are ambiguous examples in the corpus, where it is difficult to clearly determine whether *kind of* and *sort of* illustrate their diminisher, approximator or booster values, as is the case of (102):

(102) *# If we do end up with Sissoko, who I think will come in and replace Gosling, we would have some quality midfielders there! # On the transfer front, all I can see happening in the following 2 windows is as follow (****sort of*** *hoping as well). # Loads of things determine how a player settles. The league they come from, their ability, style of play, etc. #* (from nufcblog.com – BrE)

In this instance *sort of* is probably used to express approximation, although a diminisher reading might also be possible. In cases like this one, several native speakers were consulted in order to identify the most salient interpretation. That was the value included then in our database and that way it was possible to assign a particular meaning of each of the 1,323 examples in our dataset, as seen in Table 13, which also includes a column accounting for the very few cases in which *kind of* and *sort of* function as quotative markers (see above), which cannot be assigned any of the three meanings.

The data in Table 13 show that the semantic behaviour of *kind of* and *sort of* shows no differences across varieties. The approximator function of the expressions is the most frequent one for each of the two markers in the whole sample, it is the most frequent one for each variety as a whole and it is also the most numerous one if we agglutinate all the corpus examples. The diminisher role always comes second, the booster role always ranks third and the quotative marker value always closes the list. What is more, if we pay attention to the percentages set in brackets, we will notice that the frequency differences among these semantic values are always very consistent. Thus, for instance, if we analyse the total figures included in the last row of Table 13, we will see that *kind of* and *sort of* are used as approximators in nearly 60% of the cases, whereas the second most common function (i.e. diminisher) is used in 29% of the examples, i.e. slightly less than a half of the first value. The frequency difference with the third semantic trait (i.e. booster) is also remarkable: Only 10.6% of cases convey this meaning. The quotative marker value is clearly behind the booster function, too (0.5% of the cases). Overall, then, the uniform pattern of semantic behaviour shown in Table 13 is evident.

The chi-square test was applied to the total number of occurrences of *kind of* / *sort of* as diminishers, approximators, boosters and quotative markers per varieties and per pairs. The results show that differences are significant only in two cases, both involving SingE[21]. Thus, the use

[21] These are the results of the application of the test per pairs of varieties (socscistatistics.com; 10 June, 2020):(i) AmE vs. BrE: The chi-square statistic is 3.6584. The p-value is .300796. The result is not significant at $p < .05$; (ii) PhilE vs. SingE: The chi-square statistic is 7.866. The p-value is .048864. The result is significant at $p < .05$; (iii) AmE vs. PhilE: The chi-square statistic is 2.0304. The p-value is .566118. The result is

of *kind of* and *sort of* as boosters is significantly higher in SingE than in PhilE and AmE.

Turning now to the comparison between *kind of* and *sort of*, they show similar frequency patterns when acting as quotative markers, but there are differences in the remaining semantic values: While both *kind of* and *sort of* show the same ranking of semantic values, approximator > diminisher > booster > quotative, the proportion of *sort of* as approximator is much higher than that of the other semantic values, as if it were more specialized in the expression of approximative values than *kind of*. The chi-square test indicates that these differences between the markers are significant[22].

Table 13: Semantic values of *kind of* and *sort of*.

Variety and pragmatic marker	**Diminisher value**	**Approximator value**	**Booster value**	**Quotative marker**	**Total**
AmE *kind of*	75	101	20	0	196
AmE *sort of*	57	147	9	3	216
AmE total	132 (32.0%)	248 (60.2%)	29 (7.0%)	3 (0.8%)	412
BrE *kind of*	33	68	12	1	114
BrE *sort of*	18	63	7	0	88
BrE total	51 (25.2%)	131 (64.9%)	19 (9.4%)	1 (0.5%)	202
PhilE *kind of*	38	53	19	0	110
PhilE *sort of*	55	142	10	1	208

not significant at $p < .05$; (iv) AmE vs. SingE: The chi-square statistic is 16.5587. The p-value is .000871. The result is significant at $p < .05$; (v) BrE vs. PhilE: The chi-square statistic is 1.0743. The p-value is .783285. The result is not significant at $p < .05$; and (vi) BrE vs. SingE: The chi-square statistic is 6.4858. The p-value is .090224. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.

[22] The chi-square statistic is 34.7224. The *p*-value is < 0.00001. The result is significant at $p < .05$ (socscistatistics.com; 10 June, 2020).

Variety and pragmatic marker	Diminisher value	Approximator value	Booster value	Quotative marker	Total
PhilE total	93 (29.2%)	195 (61.4%)	29 (9.1%)	1 (0.3%)	318
SingE *kind of*	46	73	33	2	154
SingE *sort of*	62	145	30	0	237
SingE total	108 (27.6%)	218 (55.8%)	63 (16.1%)	2 (0.5%)	391
kind of total	192 (33.4%)	295 (51.4%)	84 (14.6%)	3 (0.6%)	574
sort of total	192 (25.6%)	497 (66.4%)	56 (7.5%)	4 (0.5%)	749
Total	**384 (29.0%)**	**792 (59.9%)**	**140 (10.6%)**	**7 (0.5%)**	**1,323**

4.2. The pragmatic values of *kind of* and *sort of*

The main pragmatic values of *kind of* and *sort of* are their uses as stance markers and as hedges. For instance, *kind of* and *sort of* can serve speakers to show their opinion and attitude on a given topic that is being dealt with in discourse. This possibility that the pragmatic markers allow is, as a matter of fact, what explains the introduction of *kind of* in example (97) above, from SingE (i.e. *kind of rustic, but not in a bad way as it keeps the price down...*). In this example *kind of* is the mirror of the speaker's opinion on a product that is described in the text. Specifically, in this extract *kind of* acts as a diminisher because it serves to tone down the speaker's opinion of that product, and in this way the speaker avoids sounding too brusque in front of the recipient of the message.

Sentences (103) and (104) further illustrate their use as stance markers:

(103) *I **kind of** liked thinking of you as a man and you have the same name as my late beloved father which I always thought was a good omen. At the end of the day, you're still King James to me!* (from copyblogger.com – AmE)

(104) *It was the first of September, 2010, that Stephen W. Thomas (Esq.) put on the first Folkroom gig. Just over two years ago. It seems* ***sort of*** *incredible now, to think about it that way.* (from folkroom.co.uk – BrE)

Examples (103) and (104) show *kind of* and *sort of* as stance markers. Because of the words that surround the markers, we know that the speakers are expressing their stance on a topic, with their likes and their impressions on something (i.e. *I kind of liked... / It seems sort of incredible...*). In these two fragments the pragmatic value stance marker accompanies the semantic value booster that *kind of* and *sort of* can express.

Examples (105) and (106), in turn, illustrate the use of *kind of* and *sort of* as hedges:

(105) *And to Faye, I believe you shouldn't be afraid and also shouldn't go through the trouble of getting a priest or switching phone companies. You have nothing to fear, trust me.: I was* ***kind of*** *freaked out at first, but why manifest a fear that could potentially be a positive reminder in your life?* (from knowledgerush.com – PhilE)

(106) T*here's a new underground cocktail bar called Blind Pig (+6391 7549 2264) at Salcedo Street in Makati. It's* ***sort of*** *hidden but it's very trendy and is a great place for drinks.* (from exmag.sg – SingE)

It must be pointed out that, as stated in the specific literature on the topic, the hedging function of *kind of* / *sort of* does not exclude the expression of stance through them (see Fraser, 2010; or Hengeveld & Keizer, 2011) and some scholars even make an explicit identification of the hedging function of *kind of* / *sort of* as one of the resources that the language has for the expression of a speaker's opinion or stance, and also another point of special relevance here, i.e. the fact that the pragmatic values stance markers and hedges can coexist (see Biber et al., 1999: 972-973; van Baalen, 2001). That is the case of sentences (105) and (106), which the pragmatic markers serve speakers to express an opinion but also to hedge a comment because the markers are some tools that help to tone down the element that they modify. In (106), for instance, the speaker describes a cocktail bar as *hidden*, but that negative characteristic is diminished

because of the presence of *sort of* in front of it, which is additionally accompanied by the comment that is introduced by the conjunction *but* immediately. This comment acts as a counterbalance for the negative quality of the place as *hidden*: It is then described as *very trendy* and also *as a great place for drinks*. Likewise, if we go back to example (97) from the previous section (*kind of rustic, but not in a bad way as it keeps the price down...*) we will see an additional case where a speaker expresses their opinion on a product (stance marker function) while at the same time softens their assessment on that product (hedging function).

The coexistence of the hedging and stance marker function in *kind of* and *sort of* is evident in the examples from our corpus, as seen in Table 14, which shows that *kind of* and *sort of* can be (i) stance markers, (ii) hedges and (iii) that both functions can co-occur. In general, the figures in this table show that the pragmatic value of *kind of* and *sort of* as stance markers is paramount: In 99.5% out of the 1,323 cases of the sample, the markers serve speakers to express their stance on a given topic (see the last row in Table 14, third column). The use of this pragmatic value reaches similar frequency levels in each of the two markers and in each of the four varieties, with consistent percentages that always range from 98.6% to 100% (see the third column in the table). The few examples that do not show *kind of* / *sort of* as stance markers in the sample display these expressions as quotative markers. Thus, in such cases *kind of* and *sort of* are inserted in their sentences just as indicators that what comes next is an onomatopoeic expression or a quote.

Table 14: Pragmatic values of *kind of* and *sort of*.

Variety and pragmatic marker	**Total cases**	**Stance markers**	**Hedges**
AmE *kind of*	196	196 (100%)	176 (89.8%)
AmE *sort of*	216	213 (98.6%)	204 (94.4%)
AmE total	412	409 (99.3%)	380 (92.2%)
BrE *kind of*	114	113 (99.1%)	101 (88.6%)
BrE *sort of*	88	88 (100%)	81 (92%)
BrE total	202	201 (99.5%)	182 (90.1%)
PhilE *kind of*	110	110 (100%)	91 (82.7%)
PhilE *sort of*	208	207 (99.5%)	197 (94.7%)

Variety and pragmatic marker	Total cases	Stance markers	Hedges
PhilE total	318	317 (99.7%)	288 (90.6%)
SingE *kind of*	154	152 (98.7%)	119 (77.3%)
SingE *sort of*	237	237 (100%)	207 (87.3%)
SingE total	391	389 (99.5%)	326 (83.4%)
kind of total	574	571 (99.5%)	487 (84.8%)
sort of total	749	745 (99.4%)	689 (92.0%)
Total	**1,323**	**1,316 (99.5%)**	**1,176 (88.9%)**

Regarding the use of *kind of* and *sort of* as hedges, this pragmatic value is very frequent in the sample, although it does not reach the stance marker level (i.e. 88.9%, cf. the last row, fourth column in Table 14). Let us remark here that the pragmatic value hedge is clearly attested in those cases where *kind of* and *sort of* display their semantic values as diminishers and approximators but not when they occur as boosters or as quotative markers, hence the fact that the impact of hedges in the sample reaches 88.9% of cases (rather than 100%). In this particular case of hedges, the frequency data per varieties are not as uniform as in the case of stance markers, either: The variety that resorts to hedges most often in the sample is AmE, whereas the one that uses hedges least often is SingE, with an 8.8% gap between them (i.e. 92.2% vs. 83.4% of cases, cf. the fourth column in Table 14, rows 4 and 13). Likewise, in this pragmatic value *kind of* and *sort of* do not show numbers that are as similar as the ones from their occurrence as stance markers: *sort of* is used as a hedge by the sample speakers in 92% of cases, with 84.8% for *kind of* (i.e. there is a 7.2% difference).

The fact that AmE ranks first in the percentage of cases with hedging fuction can be considered a simple result of the fact that this variety also ranks highest in the pragmatic marker to literal use rate, as shown in Table 5 above (the rate is 25.7% for AmE, 24.4% for SingE, 19.9% for PhilE and 12.6 for BrE). However, we would not expect BrE to be so systematically farther from AmE, since both are inner circle varieties of English. This leading role of AmE, apparently followed by the two outer circle varieties in this study seems to be connected to the well-known global trend of Americanization, which is discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6. *DIALECT CONVERGENCE, SORT OF*. THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF GLOBAL PHENOMENA

This chapter tries to provide a framework in which the main results of this study can be explained. Thus, although the four varieties exhibit somewhat similar behaviours of the pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of* (in a way we could say that the four varieties seem convergent in this respect; see Chapter 1), we have also shown that AmE ranks highest in a number of aspects, the most revealing of which may be the degree of idiomatization of these expressions, i.e. their pragmatic marker to literal use rate. We have seen that the origin of the pragmatic markers is found in the 18th c. both in BrE and AmE texts, but our data show that the frequency of these markers is relatively higher in AmE than in BrE (cf. dialect divergence, discussed in Chapter 1) and that, curiously enough, the frequency in the two outer circle varieties under analysis is closer to that of AmE than to BrE, which suggests a stronger influence of AmE than of BrE, even in varieties with a British matrilect (as is the case of SingE). There are several potential explanations for this. The first one is the role of globalization and Americanization in the development of linguistic varieties (see, for example, Leech et al., 2009: 252-258). A second plausible explanation has to do with the informal nature of *kind of* and *sort of* and, therefore, it relates to different degrees of colloquialization of the varieties under analysis (a label coined by Mair, 1997). The possible effects of both phenomena on our findings are discussed below.

1. AMERICANIZATION

Since the end of the Cold War, the US has become the hegemonic "military and political superpower" (Schneider, 2011: 52), which results in its strong impact not only in beliefs and views worldwide, but also in language variation. For this reason, today an increasing impact of AmE on practically all varieties of English around the globe is observed, which can be seen at work "in American-influenced lexical choices and also

in certain pronunciations" (Schneider, 2009: 67). Schneider also affirms that this situation may be due to the "growing exposure to and the great prestige of American English," which has been the result of the dominance of the American media and music industries worldwide, whereas the prestige has been the outcome of the dominant position of the United States in the politics and economics of the world (Schneider, 2009: 67).

In fact, nowadays AmE is considered the most influential variety in the English-speaking world, so much so that it is possible to refer to the Americanization of different varieties of English (Leech et al., 2009: 252 ff.; Schneider, 2009: 67; Hänsel & Deuber, 2013; Hackert, 2015; Baker, 2017: 237; Gonçalves et al., 2018; among many others). Given that (a) the different frequencies of *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers in the four varieties under study have been found to be significant (see Table 5 and Figure 2) and (b) AmE and BrE appear at opposed ends regarding the pragmatic vs. lexical function rate of *kind of* and *sort of*, we may wonder whether the degree of idiomatization of *kind of* and *sort of* in PhilE and SingE can be linked with the possible Americanization of these two varieties. A word of caution regarding the term 'Americanization' is in order, however.

As Baker (2017) shows, AmE seems to be 'ahead' of BrE in some ongoing grammatical changes, such as a decreasing use of passives, modal verbs and *wh-* relative clauses, but claiming that AmE is leading linguistic change in English equals stating that some other varieties are following, and that is far from proven (Baker, 2017: 237-238). In fact, the inter-relation between BrE and AmE, as far as language change is concerned, may fall into any of these types, according to Leech et al. (2009: 253):

- Regional specific change: On occasions, a given linguistic change takes place in one territory alone. E.g. the construction *prevent NP V-ing* (without *from*) has only taken place in BrE (and not in AmE).
- Convergent change: Two or more varieties converge in a particular change, without any clear leader. E.g. increase of the mandative subjunctive in BrE, while its spread slowed down in AmE.
- Divergent change: In this situation, while BrE changes in a given direction, AmE changes in the opposite one. E.g. the progressive passive increases in BrE, but declines in AmE.

- Parallel change: Both BrE and AmE change in the same direction and at the same time. E.g. the present progressive has increased at the same rate in both varieties.
- Different rates of change: A diachronic analysis of data sometimes shows that a given variety may start from a higher frequency of particular feature, and later be 'caught up' by the other variety. E.g. the sequence N+N started off as a trend in AmE, but the speed of the change was faster in BrE.
- Follow-my-leader: In this case, although the two varieties may be changing in a given direction, one of them may become the leader. E.g. decline of the core modal auxiliaries.

In the data analysed by Leech et al. (2009), the most recurring pattern is follow-my-leader. The lack of diachronic data on the varieties studied in this volume does not allow us to draw any conclusion as for the spread of *kind of* and *sort of* across time, but we can resort to the synchronic data in PhilE and AmE in order to provide a plausible explanation.

The Americanization of English has indeed been measured using only synchronic data, as done by Hänsel & Deuber (2013), who study journalistic language, and Gonçalves et al. (2018), who study a corpus of over 200 million geolocalized tweets produced between 2010 and 2016 all over the world. Both Hänsel & Deuber (2013) and Gonçalves et al. (2018) measure the presence of orthographic and lexical pairs that are characteristic of AmE and BrE, though for the purposes of this volume, we will pay particular attention to Gonçalves et al. (2018) as their lists are more comprehensive. Thus, they make a list of AmE and BrE orthographic pairs and another one based on lexical pairs on the grounds of their frequency of occurrence in two large corpora that are representative of each of these two varieties, i.e. the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* and the *British National Corpus*, respectively. Illustrative examples are *cupboard / closet, aubergine / eggplant, nappy / diaper* and *sweets / candy*, which comprise tokens of lexical variation where the first word is a marker of BrE and the second of AmE. Gonçalves et al. (2018) also include pairs of words that illustrate the differences existing between the two varieties at the level of spelling, as in the following cases, where the first item is characteristically British and the second American: *centre / center, analyse / analyze, neighbour / neighbor* and *paediatrician / pediatrician*, among others. Thus, once they identified

these pairs, Gonçalves et al. (2018) search for their relative frequency in all varieties of English around the world, which allows them to rank the varieties as closer or farther from AmE and BrE. In agreement with Baker (2017: 237), Gonçalves et al. (2018) find that the prevalence of either BrE and AmE orthographic norms can easily be explained by the historical background. Hence, countries where BrE was the matrilect still show a high preference for BrE spelling. However, regarding the lexicon, the prevalence of AmE vocabulary is pervasive even in territories with a strong BrE influence, such as South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Taking Gonçalves et al.'s (2018) work as a model, we have measured the degree of presence of BrE and AmE orthographic and lexical forms in the GloWbE sections of our four varieties. In order to make this search exhaustive, we considered all the inflectional forms of words. This entailed looking for forms such as *railroad* / *railroads* in nouns or *analyse* / *analyze* / *analyses* / *analyzes* / *analysed* / *analyzed* / *analysing* / *analyzing* in verbs[23]. The proportion of BrE and AmE forms in our corpus are shown in Table 15 and in Figure 5.

Several aspects can be highlighted about the numbers included in Table 15 and Figure 5. Firstly, these data show that neither the AmE nor the BrE component of GloWbE exhibits 100% of AmE and BrE features, respectively. As expected, Americanisms are predominant in AmE and Britishisms are prevalent in BrE, but such items are not the only choice for speakers in the two cases (i.e. 87.1% and 78.2% of occurrences, respectively; see also Baker, 2017 and Gonçalves et al., 2018). Secondly, the chi-square test was applied to the data from Table 15 and the result is that there is a significant difference between the varieties as for the relative frequency of Americanisms and Britishisms[24].

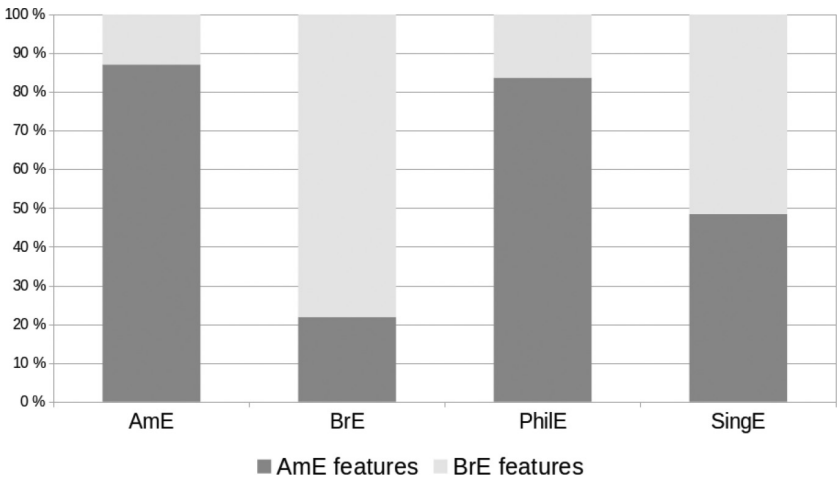
[23] For a very detailed characterization of *-ise / -ize* forms in BrE and AmE both in diachronic and syncronic terms, see Calle-Martín (2021).

[24] The chi-square statistic is 652100.679. The p-value is < 0.00001. The result is significant at $p < .05$. If varieties are paired, the differences are also significant at $p < .05$, as follows. AmE-BrE: The chi-square statistic is 619474.9248. The p-value is < .00001. AmE-PhilE: The chi-square statistic is 765.2346. The p-value is < .00001. AmE-SingE: The chi-square statistic is 77885.4515. The p-value is < .00001. BrE-PhilE:The chi-square statistic is 140440.9276. The p-value is < .00001. BrE-SingE: The chi-square statistic is 28364.0146. The p-value is < .00001. PhilE-SingE: The chi-square statistic is 22667.9777. The p-value is < .00001. (socscistatistics.com; 4 October, 2023).

Table 15: AmE vs. BrE features in GloWbE for AmE, BrE, PhilE and SingE.

	AmE features	**BrE features**	**Total**
AmE	611,375 (87.1%)	90,702 (12.9%)	702,077
BrE	163,333 (21.8%)	584,558 (78.2%)	747,891
PhilE	68,791 (83.6%)	13,474 (16.4%)	82,265
SingE	39,800 (48.5%)	42,339 (51.5%)	82,139

Figure 5: Percentages of AmE vs. BrE features in GloWbE for AmE, BrE, PhilE and SingE.



In addition, the data indicate that PhilE exhibits a high preference for AmE forms in the corpus (i.e. 83.6% of cases, very close to AmE, 87.1%), which is not unexpected given that the matrilect of PhilE is AmE. In addition, previous works have shown that the adherence to AmE spelling in PhilE has only become stronger in recent decades (Fuchs, 2022). SingE, in turn, slightly inclines towards BrE forms, which represent 51.5% of all the dialectal forms considered in this study. Although the matrilect

of this variety is BrE and, therefore, a preference for BrE forms is not unexpected, the overall presence of Britishisms is much lower than the one exhibited by BrE (i.e. 78.2%). In this respect, it is fitting to recall that SingE is agreed to be at a more advanced stage in Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model (as seen in Chapter 4). Thus, while the status of PhilE is debated (Schneider, 2007 considers that it is in phase 3, nativization, while Borlongan, 2016 claims that it has already entered phase 4), SingE is certainly more advanced (Schneider, 2014: 13) and some even claim that it is reaching phase 5, differentiation (Tan, 2012: 126; and Sim, 2014). Therefore, the higher frequency of Americanisms found in SingE than in BrE could well be explained by the evolution of this Postcolonial variety, which exhibits clear evidence of its independence from its matrilect, BrE.

If we compare our data on PhilE and SingE, we observe that the former is subject to a greater influence of Americanization at the lexical and the orthographical level (Table 15 and Figure 5), but it shows a smaller degree of idiomatization in the use of *kind of* and *sort of*. By contrast, SingE is not as Americanized as PhilE in vocabulary and spelling, but it contains a higher rate of *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers. On these grounds, we could conclude that there is no support for the hypothesis that a higher degree of Americanization implies a higher degree of idiomatization of *kind of* / *sort of*, strictly speaking.

However, if we recall the classification provided by Leech et al., (2009) on the different relations between BrE and AmE, we may reach a different conclusion. It was, of course, expected that PhilE (an AmE-based postcolonial variety) exhibited a higher frequency of AmE forms, but such forms have been in PhilE from its very foundation stage, so there has not been an Americanization process properly speaking (i.e. there is no evidence of convergence, because PhilE stems from AmE). However, the matrilect of SingE is BrE, which means that this inner circle variety was the most influential on SingE from its very origins. Therefore, that proportion of 48.5% of Americanisms found in this postcolonial variety must be understood as a recent development, i.e. the American influence on SingE has necessarily started later than that on PhilE. The fact that SingE exhibits a much higher rate of idiomatic uses of *kind of* and *sort of* than PhilE could very well be an indicator of what Leech et al. (2009: 253) call "different rates of change:" PhilE started off as an AmE-based variety, while, at least as for the use of the pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of*, SingE has 'caught up.'

Taking the previous aspects into consideration, therefore, the data from Table 15 and Figure 5 can be interpreted as pointing in the direction that the considerable use of *kind of* and *sort of* in SingE could be linked with the approximation of this variety towards AmE in recent decades; i.e. the Americanization of SingE could explain the higher degree of idiomatization of *kind of* and *sort of* in this variety in comparison with PhilE. This finding would be in keeping with Hänsel & Deuber's (2013) analysis of the Singapore press, which shows signs of an increased use of AmE lexical items (SingE is lexically converging with AmE), which they interpret as an effect of globalization (Hänsel & Deuber, 2013: 350), Singapore being "one of the most globalized countries in the world, [since] the US is one of its most important trade partners" (Hänsel & Deuber, 2013: 352). Still, another explanatory hypothesis regarding the expansion of the use of these pragmatic markers may also be linked to another recent phenomenon that accounts for several linguistic changes, namely colloquialization, discussed in the next section.

2. COLLOQUIALIZATION

Spoken and written language are not two discrete categories, but two ends of a continuum (see Chafe, 1982, as probably the earliest reference to this fact) and, therefore, the combination of features from one end with features from the other results in a wide range of linguistic varieties with different degrees of colloquial flavour. In this context, colloquialization is understood as the process that refers to the tendency of the written language to incorporate features that are associated with the spoken conversational language (as coined by Mair, 1997). This process is acknowledged as one of the most significant stylistic shifts in the 20th century that covers both changes that:

- make the written norm acquire features of the spoken norm
- make the written norm more tolerant with informality (adapted from Mair, 2006: 187)

Colloquialization reflects, at the language level, a general trend of informalization of manners that can be attested in society nowadays

(see Mair, 1997: 203; Leech, 2004: 72; Seoane & Loureiro-Porto, 2005: 106; Leech et al., 2009: 239-240; Farrelly & Seoane, 2012: 394; Collins & Yao, 2018: 253-254). Such social informalization has a correlate in linguistics, which refers to "the increasing reader-friendliness and accessibility of traditionally formal registers like newspaper writing and scientific prose" (Hiltunen & Loureiro-Porto, 2020: 2) and it is closely related to the the *personalization* of mass media communication (Fairclough, 1989) and *conversationalization*, or a simulation of spoken conversation in public discourses (Fairclough, 2003; Smith, 2020). Given the nature of the corpus used in the analysis of *kind of* and *sort of* in this volume, the use of colloquial features to convey a more personal or conversational voice in general webpages and blogs is a likely option that deserves to be explored.

These changes have been observed in AmE and BrE and in other inner circle varieties, such as Canadian English (D'Arcy, 2015: 57) and Australian English (Collins & Yao, 2018). Outer circle varieties of English have also been explored in this respect and differences have been found between them. Thus, for example, Xiao (2009) adopts Biber's (1988) multidimensional analysis and explores his five dimensions in BrE and four Asian varieties, namely those spoken in Hong Kong, India, Singapore and the Philippines. His findings show that Indian English ranks lowest in Biber's (1988) dimension 1, 'informational vs involved production,' which measures degree of informality as opposed to highly crafted texts. The two varieties studied in this volume, namely SingE and PhilE, are found to be very similar in Xiao's (2009) study. However, in a more detailed analysis of colloquialisms, Collins (2013) finds that SingE ranks ahead of PhilE, at least in the *International Corpus of English* (Greenbaum, 1988). For this reason, it is fitting to conduct an analysis of the texts found in GloWbE, the corpus in which we have based our study, because, as Baker (2017: 234) notes, a number of pragmatic markers that are associated with spoken language, such as *sorry*, *please* and *anyway*, "are beginning to make inroads into writing." The pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of* are strongly associated with conversation, as we know, so all these facts make it necessary to study whether the use of these pragmatic markers in the four varieties under analysis correlates with a differing tendency for colloquialization.

To this end, following the same procedure as for testing the Americanization hypothesis, we isolated five characteristic pairs of colloquialization vs. non-colloquialization features that were explored in the GloWbE sections for AmE, BrE, PhilE and SingE. These pairs of features were taken from the relevant literature on the topic (cf. Leech et al., 2009: 239-249; Farrelly & Seoane, 2012: 394-395; Collins & Yao, 2013), namely (i) use of contractions (vs. full forms), (ii) *get*-passive (vs. *be*-passive), (iii) *not*-negation (vs. *no-negation*), (iv) relativizer *that* (vs. *who/which*), and (v) semi-modals (vs. core modals), as illustrated in (107)-(111):

(107) *This **isn't** a hypothetical situation -- it really happened.* (from amptoons.com – AmE) / *This **is not** a random process.* (from acimexplained.com – SingE)

(108) *She **got paid** 2 million for working with Littlewoods* (from dailymail.co.uk – BrE) / *But I **was paid** in another way.* (from bosanchez.ph – PhilE)

(109) *I **don't have any** money left.* (from gingersoftware.com – PhilE) / *Also, I **have no** money to pay for this*. (from moneysmart.sg – SingE)

(110) *This is the man **that** has lied through his teeth for well over ten years*. (from guardian.co.uk – BrE) / *You will always be the man **who** won the Tour de France seven times!* (from blog.livestrong.com – AmE)

(111) *You**'ve got to** admit that black is the easiest colour to match with*. (from iisjong.blogspot.com – SingE) / *You might be the most pleasant person on earth, but you **must** admit that you to have your moments of those exasperating moods!* (from caraeclesiblings.info – PhilE)

Table 16 shows that the rate of colloquial features in the four varieties under analysis ranges between 18.1% (PhilE) and 25.2% (AmE). Given this information, we can now compare the four varieties of this study as regards their use of *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers and their presence of colloquialization features. Such comparison is shown in Table 17.

Table 16: Colloquial vs. non-colloquial features in GloWbE for AmE, BrE, PhilE and SingE.

Colloquial vs. non-colloquial features		**AmE**	**BrE**	**PhilE**	**SingE**
1	Verbs in contracted forms	4,975,420	4,097,729	373,122	422,501
2	Passive constructions with GET	67,003	57,511	6,112	6,475
3	Negations with *not*	7,144	6,511	650	729
4	Relative clauses with *that*	634,025	546,446	53,475	46,342
5	Semi-modal verbs	270,177	268,131	25,926	28,821
Colloquial features TOTAL		**5,953,769 (25.2%)**	**4,959,284 (21.4%)**	**423,285 (18.1%)**	**504,868 (20.4%)**
1	Verbs in full forms	15,638,407	15,790,204	1,658,126	1,729,030
2	Passive constructions with BE	1,199,852	1,465,194	159,823	140,653
3	Negations with *no*	134,624	132,095	11,792	12,104
4	Relative clauses with *which / who*	275,899	284,077	29,582	26,692
5	Modal verbs	415,931	447,560	56,215	57,648
Non-colloquial features TOTAL		**17,664,713 (74.8%)**	**18,119,100 (78.6%)**	**1,915,538 (81.9%)**	**1,966,127 (79.6%)**

Table 17 shows that AmE is the leader both in the use of *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers and in the spread of colloquial features in the GloWbE material under analysis. What is more, the percentages of use of both aspects are similar (i.e. 25.7% and 25.2%). Using this information, therefore, we can state that the higher proportion of pragmatic

markers in AmE is parallel to a stronger tendency in this variety to use colloquial characteristics.

Table 17: Comparison of varieties regarding the use of pragmatic markers and colloquialization features.

Position	**Rate of idiomaticity of *kind of / sort of***	**Rate of colloquialization features**
1st	AmE (25.7%)	AmE (25.2%)
2nd	SingE (24.4%)	BrE (21.4%)
3rd	PhilE (19.9%)	SingE (20.4%)
4th	BrE (12.6%)	PhilE (18.1%)

As regards BrE, GloWbE does not record as many cases of colloquial features as in AmE (i.e. 21.4% vs. 25.2%). This result is not surprising if we take into account further sources of information on this particular point: Collins (2013: 166) and Collins & Yao (2013), for example, claim that BrE is generally more conservative than AmE in the use of colloquial features. Despite this, we must note that BrE ranks high in its use of colloquial features: It is the second on the list in Table 17 and this is in keeping with the information provided by Collins (2013), who shows that inner circle varieties have a higher preference for colloquialisms than outer circle ones. However, there is an aspect about the BrE data in Table 17 that deserves particular attention: Even though this variety uses colloquial features abundantly, it shows the lowest percentage in the use of *kind of* / *sort of* (i.e. 12.6%). Consequently, we must conclude that the high proportion of colloquial characteristics here does not mean that *kind of* and *sort of* are used on the same scale; the two pragmatic markers of this study behave differently.

If we compare the two outer circle varieties now, SingE and PhilE, the former is closer to AmE both in the proportion of pragmatic markers and in the display of colloquial characteristics. Therefore, these data could indicate that the considerable use of *kind of* and *sort of* in SingE could

be linked with a more advanced stage of the process of colloquialization that it has undergone as compared to PhilE.

3. SOME CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The previous sections have discussed the role potentially played by Americanization and colloquialization in the differential presence of the pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of* in the four varieties under analysis. However, so far we have considered the two processes independently, although there is evidence that AmE and informal style tend to correlate (e.g. Quirk et al., 1985: 447, note, 662, 1106, note a, 1111, note b; Kövecses, 2000: 235 ff.). Consequently, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle both phenomena.

In fact, according to Leech et al. (2009: 256) Americanization and colloquialization seem to "cooperate with each other." That was the case, in the study they conducted, for the expansion of contractions in different registers, which is considered a paradigmatic piece of evidence of colloquialization and has spread all over AmE registers. Additional examples of how colloquialization and Americanization correlate involve the increasing use of semi-modals, such as *want to* and *going to* and the *get*-passive. However, AmE does not only correlate with colloquialization but also with another recent process of language change with anti-colloquial flavour, namely densification (Leech et al., 2009: 257; Baker, 2017: 238-240). Thus, for example, the increasing frequency of noun + noun patterns and condensed appositions (of the sort *bearded Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro*), which are farther from colloquial varieties, also originated and expanded in AmE first (Leech et al., 2009: 257). In other words, not every linguistic change in AmE responds to a wish for colloquiality or informality.

In the particular case of *kind of* and *sort of*, we could also consider that AmE is the leader in the rate of their idiomatic use because these pragmatic markers are highly colloquial and, on occasions, AmE does correlate with colloquialization. If we did this, we would be taking the risk of oversimplifying the explanation of how language changes.

As we have seen above, the role of *kind of* and *sort of* is not simply to provide the text with a colloquial flavour, but, more importantly, to hedge the speaker/writer's opinion, i.e. to save their face and avoid

potentially impolite situations. This pragmatic value of *kind of* and *sort of* comes as particularly priceless when communication takes place in an environment in which the speaker/writer does not know who the listener/reader is, where they live or what cultural background they have. In this line, it is well-known that, although the concept of *face* is universal, what constitutes face is not, since, for instance, in Asia face is not associated with a single individual, but "with a group relevant to the speech situation" (Kachru, 2017: 276; see also section 3 in Chapter 4 for further cultural differences between English-speaking territories). In addition, we must not forget that the texts included in GloWbE are exclusively found in the Internet, which is the most global communicative forum, and one which differs considerably from other spoken or written forms of communication. In this scenario, the language used in the Internet has been considered to be more flexible and open than other registers in the sociolinguistics of globalization (Coupland, 2003: 470) and also more prone to enhancing politeness (Lakoff, 2005). In fact, the new communicative channel opened up by the Internet has led to an attempt to including an increasing diversity while media compete for ratings and audience (Lakoff, 2005). The wish not to exclude the audience resorting to positive politeness had already been pointed out as a characteristic of AmE by Brown and Levinson (1987: 245), although it was only later described as "an increasingly conventionalized-camaraderie society" (Lakoff, 2005: 34). After the headstart of AmE, BrE followed its example (Sifianou, 2013: 89) in a *follow-my-leader* fashion (Leech et al., 2009: 253). Different cultural kinds of politeness are likely to result in miscommunication, as illustrated by Bailey (2000) in the interaction patterns he observed between Korean immigrant retailers and African American customers in Los Angeles. While the former tend to focus on the business transaction, which makes them be considered rude and unfriendly, the latter tend to be too talkative, which is attributed by the Korean immigrants as lack of cultured socializing in childhood. This type of exchange in physical encounters in multi-ethnic cities like Los Angeles has become a very likely situation in the global internet-based world portrayed in GloWbE.

Linguistic globalization, then, is a much more complex phenomenon than simple Americanization or colloquialization, since it can only be accounted for by paying specific attention to the inter-relatedness of global practices (that would lead in principle to dialect convergence) and local

practices (which would foster dialect divergence). In the particular case of *kind of* and *sort of*, the pragmatics of politeness reaches in the Internet a degree of complexity that could only be described if considering other local competing face-saving markers alongside the roles played by global processes such as the ones described here. After all, it has been shown before that, at least in PhilE, "it seems that [some] Tagalog particles […] allow for more convenience in use at least in spoken discourse compared to their structurally more complex equivalents in English" (Borlongan, 2011: 72). There seem to be reasons to hypothesize that the Internet is the forum where the use of English pragmatic markers were preferred in outer circle varieties (as a result of globalization), but this finding by Borlongan (2011) casts some doubts on this hypothesis, since Internet writers may also be appealing to a local audience (e.g. online newspapers) where competing indigenous hedges and pragmatic markers could come into play. The tension between global phenomena, such as Americanization and colloquialization (that lead to convergence), and local preferences (that lead to divergence) should not be overlooked and we make a plea for further studies to take this double approach to pragmatic variation, although, for reasons of space, it must be left out of this volume.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

Despite their crucial role in everyday communication, pragmatic markers were understudied in traditional linguistic research until the last quarter of the 20th century, partly due to difficulties in defining and categorizing them and their perceived inferiority compared to grammar and vocabulary. However, recent decades have witnessed a growing interest in pragmatic markers, especially in the field of pragmatics, which investigates how people use language in context to achieve their communicative goals. This is driven by the recognition that pragmatic markers facilitate the conveyance of intentions, attitudes, social and cultural norms, and social relationships, as well as the realization that their forms and functions vary across languages and cultures, reflecting the interplay between language and culture. Within this context, this volume has shown that the study of pragmatic markers is a significant and burgeoning area of linguistic research that can shed light on the complex interplay between language and culture in communication.

Stemming from well-known sociolinguistic concepts such as dialect convergence and dialect divergence, we have described the blossoming field of World Englishes, which emerged as a result of four diasporas that explain the presence of this language across the world. Although these varieties have been studied in phonological, morphological and syntactic terms, the discourse-pragmatic level seems particularly relevant since understanding the variations in World Englishes can aid in reducing (mis)communication in real-world contexts. The analysis of the pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of* has been informed by the extent to which the varieties of English identified in Kachru's (1985) Concentric Circles Model exhibit divergence or convergence. Such divergence can be attributed to various factors, including local practices, ethnicity, and regional identity, while convergence may arise from global processes such as Americanization and globalization. This dichotomy has been integral to the discourse surrounding the aforementioned pragmatic markers, which were described in detail in Chapter 2, which presented the main morpho-syntactic features of *kind of* and *sort of* in inner circle varieties of English, as well as their possible meanings and pragmatic

values. All the possible semantic nuances of *kind of* and *sort of* were reduced to three core values, namely diminishers, approximators and boosters. The main semantic functions of these markers were shown to convey stance and to hedge the speaker's utterances, and both meanings can frequently overlap (as also shown in Chapter 5).

Chapter 3 focused on the most salient features of the history and development of *kind of* and *sort of* from the Middle Ages (which throws light on the development of these expressions from noun + prepositional phrase into adverbs and, then, into discourse markers). Adopting a historical perspective, the chapter also discussed the role played by general phenomena of language change, such as renalysis, metaphor, grammaticalization and pragmaticalization. The latter two phenomena have been the subject of much discussion regarding their potential (inter) dependence. In analysing the development of the pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of* from noun + preposition to pragmatic markers, two processes can be considered: grammaticalization and pragmaticalization. The crucial discussion concerns whether the grammar of English encompasses pragmatic functions or not: if pragmatics is to be considered outside grammar, then pragmaticalization is an independent phenomenon; if, conversely, grammar is considered to encompass pragmatics, pragmaticalization must be seen as a subclass of grammaticalization. After the application of different criteria, we concluded that *kind of* and *sort of* can be seen as examples of grammaticalization as they exhibit some of typical features of this process.

The complex, mutifaceted system of World Englishes was described in Chapter 4, which revised the main theoretical models of analysis, described the two outer circle varieties studied in this volume (PhilE and SingE), and introduced the field of postcolonial pragmatics. After a description of the main models of analysis of World Englishes, we concluded that Kachru's (1985) inner circle and outercircle labels are still convenient to refer to distinct varieties of English, despite the potential conceptual issues that may arise from their use. In fact, our research focused on four varieties of English, two of which are categorized as inner circle (British English and American English) and two as outer circle (Philippine English and Singaporean English). In addition, we also explained why we followed Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model to describe the development of the outer circle varieties, rather than other

models (such as Mair's, 2013 World System of Englishes and Buschfeld & Kautzsch's, 2017, 2020 EIF Model).

Chapter 5, the longest in the volume, justified the usefulness of a corpus-based approach and showed the results of our analysis by describing the syntactic and the semantic/pragmatic properties of *kind of* and *sort of* in the four varieties, which can be summarized as follows:

- Of all the possible syntactic environments where the two pragmatic markers can appear, the most frequent one in the sample is, by far, *kind of* / *sort of* + verb (598 cases, i.e. 45.4% of the sample). The form *kind of* has a stronger tendency than *sort of* to modify adjectives, and in this sense these data coincide with those provided by Gries & David (2007). By contrast, *sort of* surpasses *kind of* when it comes to modifying adverbs, verbs, noun phrases and prepositional phrases, as well as for standing alone. In Gries & David's (2007) sample the association *sort of* + adverb / verb is also important.
- Of all the semantic types of verbs that can be modified by *kind of* and *sort of*, the markers show a clear preference for activity and gradable verbs in the sample (with 30.7% and 99.5% of cases, respectively).
- As expected, *kind of* and *sort of* can have both a narrow and a wide scope in GloWbE. However, it is much more frequent for the markers to acquire a narrow scope: This was attested in more than 90% of the cases from each of the four varieties under study.
- Of the three semantic values studied in this book, the approximating role of *kind of* and *sort of* is clearly the most frequent one in the sample. The order of frequency is approximators (59.9% of cases) > diminishers (29.0%) > boosters (10.6%), and this order is consistent across the four varieties. *Sort of* has a stronger tendency than *kind of* to show the approximator value.
- In the area of pragmatics, the sample of this book illustrated the key values of *kind of* / *sort of* that are described in previous works (e.g. van Baalen, 2001; De Smedt et al., 2007; Fetzer, 2009; or Fraser, 2010). For instance, the two markers serve speakers to show their opinion and attitude on a given topic and they are also used when speakers wish to convey only a certain amount of information to their hearers. The sample also contains texts where *kind of* and *sort*

of help speakers to express themselves in an informal way, to avoid a technical tone, to give information in a subjective manner and to create a relaxed atmosphere in linguistic interaction. On other occasions the writers in GloWbE decide to intensify the meaning of their messages. Within the two main pragmatic values of *kind of* and *sort of* that are identified in this book, i.e. stance markers and hedges, the former is the most predominant one (with 99.5% of the corpus instances, with 88.9% for hedges). The two pragmatic values frequently coexist.

- The two expressions possess very distinctive pragmatic values when they act as quotative markers. These uses are not very common but the variety where they appear most often in the sample is AmE.
- In our corpus sample, the sequences *kind of* and *sort of* are much more frequent in their literal uses (i.e. as 'class of,' with 79.3% of occurrences) than in their pragmatic marker functions (as 'somewhat,' with 20.7% of cases). As is possible in the process of grammaticalization, here the grammaticalized elements (i.e. *kind of* / *sort of* as pragmatic markers) are not as frequent as the lexical morphemes from which they derive (see Heine & Kuteva, 2007: 39).
- The sequence *sort of* has a higher proportion of pragmatic marker uses than *kind of* in AmE, PhilE and SingE, with similar percentages (27.0%, 26.0% and 29.6% respectively). This could be indicative of an influence of AmE on the two outer circle varieties in this specific aspect, in line with the process of Americanization of different varieties of English today (cf. Leech et al., 2009: 252 ff.; Schneider, 2009: 67; Hackert, 2015; Baker, 2017: 237; Gonçalves et al., 2018).
- The pragmatic marker to literal use rate for *kind of* and *sort of* (i.e. its degree of idiomatization) is higher in the outer than in the inner circle. However, this general result overlooks the deep differences between AmE and BrE. In the former, *kind of* and *sort of* exhibit the highest degree of idiomatization, while BrE occupies the opposite end. These data could support a number of specific observations from the relevant literature positing a link between AmE and informal style (e.g. Quirk et al., 1985: 447, note, 662,1106, note a, 1111, note b; Kövecses, 2000: 235 ff), although

> AmE has also been found to foster the increasing frequency of anti-colloquialization patterns (Chapter 6).

In order to provide an explanation of the state of affairs described in Chapter 5, Chapter 6 focused on different phenomena that can explain why the frequency in the use of *kind of* and *sort of* as pragmatic markers is similar in AmE, SingE, and in PhilE (and dissimilar from BrE). Thus, we considered two hypothesis, namely Americanization (alongside globalization) and colloquialization. The two were tested by further scrutinizing the corpus in search of evidence for any of these recent processes of language change. Americanization was measured by comparing BrE and AmE lexical and orthographic pairs, while colloquialization was determined on the basis of five grammatical features, namely contractions, the *get*-passive (as opposed to the *be*-passive), *not* negation (vs. *no*-negation), relativizer *that* (vs. *who, which*) and the semi-modals (vs. core modals). Both phenomena were shown to exhibit the same pattern, which would reinforce the idea that the two processes have synergic functions. Although the presence of Americanisms in SingE is lower than in PhilE, we have claimed that the process of Americanization takes place at a higher pace in SingE, which in recent decades has departed considerably from its matrilect, BrE (while it is converging with AmE). In addition, SingE ranks second in rate of colloquialisms and also in the idiomatization of *kind of* and *sort of.* Thus, all processes could be interrelated and we could be witnessing a case of dialect convergence of outer circle varieties of English with AmE. However, we also mentioned that the phenomenon of linguistic globalization is not solely attributable to Americanization or colloquialization, but is a complex process that requires consideration of both global and local practices. The case of the pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of* on the Internet highlights the intricate nature of politeness strategies, which involves both global processes and local practices. While it may be assumed that outer circle varieties of English prefer English pragmatic markers due to globalization, we cannot discard the idea that indigenous markers are selected to appeal a local readership. This tension between global and local influences should not be overlooked in studies of pragmatic variation, and further research is needed to explore this dual approach, even if it cannot be included in this particular volume due to space limitations.

These conclusions are contingent upon the specific corpus sample analysed, highlighting the imperative for further research to gain a better understanding of the behaviour of these markers within contemporary English discourse. To augment our comprehension on these pragmatic markers, forthcoming studies could encompass a broader spectrum of inner and outer circle varieties, as well as expand the sample size. With GloWbE including texts from 16 other territories, a future study could investigate whether the frequency of pragmatic marker usage in *kind of* and *sort of* is influenced by Americanization, colloquialization, or the intricate dynamics of the sociolinguistics of globalization. Undoubtedly, explorations into the usage of pragmatic markers in the native languages (L1) spoken within these territories would significantly contribute to shedding light on the expression of stance and hedging devices, from a postcolonial pragmatics perspective. All these multifaceted dimensions are pivotal within the purview of studying English varieties in the 21st century and should not be disregarded.

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This book contributes to the field of pragmatic variation in World Englishes by analysing the pragmatic markers *kind of* and *sort of*. After a general review of their history and current use, the book offers a contrastive study of their frequency, semantics and pragmatic values in four varieties of English, as represented in the GloWbE corpus. These are, on the one hand, the two most influential inner circle varieties of English, those spoken in the United States and Great Britain, and, on the other, two outer circle varieties spoken in former colonies of these two countries, namely the Philippines and Singapore respectively. The results strengthen the understanding of the effects of global processes such as Americanization and glocalization on pragmatic variation and illustrate phenomena of linguistic convergence and divergence across space.

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