

From Exclusive Particle to Adversative Conjunction: A Study on the Particle *tasol* in Tok Pisin

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0. Introduction

In this paper¹, I show how fine grained pragmatic analysis provides tools for diachronic semantic change and grammaticalization. By featurising pragmatic functions we could better explain semantic change and even make predictions about possible grammaticalization path. I discuss how reanalysis motivated by both syntactic and pragmatic factors plays a role in semantic extension in pidgin/creole languages. The empirical base for this study is synchronic use of the multifunctional particle *tasol* in Tok Pisin, one of the Melanesian pidgins spoken in Papua New Guinea. The functional range of the particle *tasol* covers that of exclusive particle (such as Eng. *only*) and adversative conjunction (such as Eng. *but*). Such a close interrelationship between exclusive particle and adversative conjunction is often observed cross-linguistically. Employing a set of semantic/pragmatic features, I show that the two functions overlap extensively.

1. Current Usage of *tasol* in Tok Pisin

1.1. Data

Tok Pisin is an English based pidgin/creole spoken in Papua New Guinea. According to Mühlhäusler et al. (2003), the early form of Tok Pisin was brought to Papua New Guinea by thousands of Bismarck Islanders who worked in the German plantation of Samoa, and who had contact with already existed plantation pidgin spoken by Kiribati workers in the later 1900. Tok Pisin spread back to the villages from the plantation since 1900, and by the late 1920s Tok Pisin had established itself firmly in most areas of New Guinea. As Mühlhäusler et al. (2003) states, “Tok Pisin is a typical example of the fact that pidgin and creole languages have a faster rate of development than ‘normal languages’” (Mühlhäusler et al. 2003:5). My

¹ This paper is based on the M. A. thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at The University of Tokyo in 1998.

analysis is based on the 517 tokens of the particle *tasol* from two published sources. Dutton's (1985) *A New Course in Tok Pisin* (NCTP) is a 400-page textbook with fourteen accompanying tapes. Verhaar's (1995) *Towards a Reference Grammar of Tok Pisin* (TRG) contains numerous examples drawn from a written corpus of 1.6 million words of Tok Pisin.

1.2. Current Usage of *tasol*

In the Jacaranda dictionary by Mihalic (1971), the word *tasol* is referred to as being derived from English expression 'that's all'. The dictionary divided the usage of *tasol* into two categories: the first usage is translated as *only, alone, just*. The second usage is translated as *but, and however*. In 'Tok Pisin-English vocabulary' which is an appendix in Dutton (1985), *tasol* is glossed as – *but, just, and only*. These descriptions reveal that both exclusive function and adversative functions are salient in the use of *tasol*, and not that one of them is rather a marginal usage.

Based on 517 tokens, I recognized four major functions in the current usages of *tasol*. First, the expression 'em *tasol*' is used just like its original use in English 'that's all.'

- (1) Man: Em olgeta kago bilong yu?
'Is that all your baggage?'

Tuptup: Em *tasol*.
'Yes'

[NCTP:128]

Em in this expression is a demonstrative pronoun in Tok Pisin. Therefore, notice that 'that's all' is already grammaticalized as it comes after the demonstrative pronoun in Tok Pisin. 'Em *tasol*' is frequently used at the end of the discourse as in example (2).

- (2) [After talking about the accident]
Maurice: ... Orait mi kam nau mi go bam antap long en. Em *tasol*.
'And so I came and ran into him. That's all.'

[NCTP:287]

Secondly, *tasol* is used as an exclusive particle that typically modifies the arguments preceding *tasol*. Note that the place of the modifier is different from that in English where the word *only* usually comes before the elements that are modified.

- (3) Yupela i mas yusim Tok Inglis *tasol*.
'You have to use only English.'

[NCTP:206]

- (4) Dicks: Hamas tok ples yu save long en?

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‘How many languages do you know?’

Rebecca: Mi save long tripela tok ples *tasol*. Em Inglis, Pidgin na tok ples Bukawa.

‘I know only three: English, Tok Pisin and Bukawa.’ [NCTP:21]

According to Sankoff (1993, 1999), the use of the postposed particles (focus, intensifier, quantifier, reflexives) in Tok Pisin involves one of the most un-English elements. Sankoff (1999:11) notes many Oceanic languages apparently emphasize or focus through the use of postposed affixes or particles.

The third function is the one as an emphatic particle. In example (5), *tasol* modifies *nau* to emphasize the freshness of the fish that she sells.

(5) Ol i nupela. Nau *tasol* ol i hukim.
‘They are fresh. They’ve just been caught.’ [NCTP:30]

(6) Em i slip long bet na i guria *tasol*.
‘He lies on his bed and just shivers (all the time).’ [TRG:37]

Interestingly, *tasol* sometimes co-occurs with concessive construction as in examples (7) and (8). In Tok Pisin, clauses preceded by *maski* express the idea of concessive structures such as English clauses that start with *although* or *no matter*. Dutton (1985) says that if one wants to strengthen the idea of *even if* or *although*, one merely adds *tasol* to the beginning of the following clause.

(7) Maski em i hatwok tru, *tasol* em i no save kwiktaim.
‘Even if he works hard at it he won’t learn quickly.’ [NCTP:280]

(8) Maski Papua Niu Gini i kisim independens pinis, *tasol* Austrelia i mas halivim em yet.
‘Australia must continue to help Papua New Guinea even though she is now independent.’ [NCTP:281]

Finally, there are many examples of *tasol* as adversative conjunction as in (9) and (10).

(9) A Sanmik i gutpela *tasol* Sanmik em i swit tumas.
‘Ah, San Miguel is good but it is too sweet.’ [NCTP:44]

(10) Em i laik maritim em *tasol* papa bilong em i no laikim man ya.
‘She wants to marry him but her father doesn’t like him.’ [NCTP:181]

In example (9), the conjunction *tasol* combines proposition A (San Miguel is good) and proposition B (it is too sweet) and implicates that there is a contrast between these two propositions. According to Dutton (1985:30), younger better educated speakers are now using *bat* for this usage.

These four functions generally show different syntactic preferences. In idiomatic expression, *tasol* always comes after *em*. *Tasol* as an exclusive particle likes to have an NP in its scope, and emphatic particle likes to have a VP. But exclusive *tasol* sometimes have a VP and emphatic *tasol* could have a NP as well. Emphatic *tasol* could have a clause as its scope when it co-occurs with concessive marker *maski*. *Tasol* as an adversative conjunction takes clause in the scope of *tasol*. NP, VP and Clause respectively correspond to argument, predicate, proposition in the prepositional structure. These are not the extensive lists of all the use of *tasol*, but *tasol* always occurs after its scope. Because of that, unless *tasol* is used in idiomatic expression ‘em *tasol*’ or as an exclusive particle modifying NP in subject position, the scope of *tasol* could be difficult to tell.

Below are the example sentences with *tasol* when used as exclusive particle, emphatic particle and adversative conjunction. The scope of *tasol* is marked in square brackets.

Tasol as an exclusive particle (Eng. *only*)

- (3) Yupela i mas yusim [Tok Inglis] *tasol*.
‘You have to use only English.’ [NCTP:206]

Tasol as an emphatic particle (Eng. *just*)

- (6) Em i slip long bet na [i guria] *tasol*.
‘He lies on his bed and just shivers (all the time).’ [TRG:37]

Tasol as an adversative conjunction (Eng. *but*)

- (9) A [Sanmik i gutpela] *tasol* Sanmik em i swit tumas.
‘Ah, San Miguel is good but it is too sweet.’ [NCTP:44]

In example (3), ‘tok inglis’ is the scope for the exclusive particle *tasol*. Tok inglis is a NP and an argument in the prepositional structure. In example (6), ‘i guria’ is the scope for emphatic particle *tasol*. It is a verb phrase and serves as a predicate in the prepositional structure. In example (9), ‘sanmik i gutpela’ is in the scope of *tasol* as an adversative conjunction. ‘Sanmik i gutpela’ is a clause and an independent proposition. Notice that the scope of *tasol* varies in association with function difference.

2. Pragmatic Analysis and Possible Grammaticalization Path

It would be straight forward to discuss lexical polysemy of the particle *tasol*. However, I would emphasize the importance of pragmatic analysis in examination

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of conjunctions. According to Sweetser (1990);

...at least for some conjunctions, a lexical-polysemy analysis is implausible and that pragmatic ambiguity should be taken into consideration when one tries to seize the whole and precise meaning of any given word. (Sweetser 1990)

As it is insufficient to consider semantics to look at synchronic use of the word, in a similar way, it is also important to look at fine grained pragmatics for diachronic account of meaning change.

As tools for the semantic and pragmatic analysis in order to capture the overlap of the senses, I introduce four sets of features that are listed in (11). I employed the first three sets of features from Numata (1986), and I added the last feature.

(11) 4 sets of semantic/pragmatic features (Numata 1986)

1. Focused vs. non-focused
2. Affirmation vs. negation
3. Assertion vs. implication
4. The finite set of values

As for the contrast between focused vs. non-focused, *focused* means focus values for the proposition related, and *non-focused* means complement of the focus value. Affirmation vs. negation means affirmative or negative in relation to the proposition obtained by satisfying the open sentences with a certain variable. Although I use the terms such as assertion and implication here, they simply mean whether they are clearly expressed or not, and the judgment about the status of implication such as entailment, implicature, conventional implicature, and/or presupposition often discussed in the field of pragmatics will be outside the consideration of this paper. The finite set of values is those which are under consideration as values for a propositional scheme. Example (12) is a simple English sentence provided to show how these sets of features are applied.

(12) I wrote *only* my family name.

Assertion: Affirmation of focused
(I wrote my family name)

Implication: Negation of non-focused.
(I didn't write other names of mine)

Existence of a finite set of values.
(There exists a certain set of names that I could have written)

For the sentence 'I wrote only my family name', assertion is the affirmation of the

focused value ‘my family name’ in relation to the proposition ‘I wrote X.’ Implication is negation of non-focused value, which is all the other names such as ‘first name middle name, and maiden name’ in terms of the proposition ‘I wrote X.’ Another implication is that there exists a certain set of names which I could have written including my family name that could be consist of first name, family name, and middle name, for instance.

Now I show some cases where the function of *tasol* is ambiguous between two functions using the above explained four set of features. These cases reveal the extensive overlap in semantic/pragmatic functions among different senses of *tasol*. I consider that such syntactically ambiguous, semantic and pragmatically similar forms as an environment where reanalysis may occur. In example (6), *tasol* is ambiguous and can be interpreted either as an exclusive particle or an emphatic particle.

- (6) Em i slip long bet na i guria *tasol*.
‘He lies on his bed and just shivers (all the time).’ [TRG:37]

Exclusive particle reading

- Assertion: Affirmation of focused
(he carried out an action of shivering)
Implication: Negation of non-focused
(he didn’t carry out many alternative actions which he
could have selected)
A finite set of values (all the alternative actions)

Emphatic particle reading

- Assertion: Affirmation of focused
(he carried out an action of shivering)

In the exclusive particle reading, assertion would be that he carried out an action of shivering, and implication would be he didn’t carry out many alternative actions which he could have selected. In the emphatic particle reading, there is only an assertion ‘he carried out an action of shivering’ as a pragmatic function.

Example (13) demonstrates the ambiguity between exclusive particle and adversative conjunction.

- (13) Aiwara i ken kam daun long nait *tasol* long moningtaim bai yu amamas
gen.
‘Perhaps you weep during the night, but in the morning you will be joyful
again.’

Exclusive particle reading

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- Assertion: Affirmation of focused
(you will weep during the night)
- Implication: Negation of non-focused
(you will not weep during other time)
A finite set of values (a certain time period)

Adversative conjunction reading

- Assertion: Affirmation of focused
(you will weep during the night)
- Assertion: Negation of non-focused
(you will be joyful again in the morning)
- Implication: A finite set of values (a certain time period)

If we read the *tasol* as an exclusive particle, the assertion and implication would be as follows. In exclusive reading, assertion is affirmation of focused (you will weep during the night). Implications are the negation of non-focused (you will not weep during other time), and a finite set of values (a certain time period). In adversative conjunction reading of *tasol*, both affirmation of focused and negation of non-focused values are assertions, and a finite set of values is implication.

What do these ambiguous sentences suggest in terms of the polysemy of *tasol*? I assume that these ambiguous sentences are showing the possible path for the diachronic semantic change. I propose that the exclusive particle became reanalyzable as an adversative conjunction via a stage as an emphatic particle. This hypothesis is based on what the synchronic pragmatic ambiguity shows us about the diachronic path of semantic expansion. Such semantic link among an exclusive particle and an emphatic particle and an adversative conjunction is not only found in Tok Pisin. There is a cross-linguistic link between these three functions. English *only* and French *seulement* also have these three functions and typically have the similar syntactic preferences. Below is an example of English *only*. In exclusive function, the scope of *only* tends to be NP. In emphatic function, the scope of *only* is VP. In adversative function, the scope of *only* must be a clause.

- (12) I wrote *only* my family name. (Exclusive particle)
Scope of *only* → my family name (NP)
- (14) It will *only* make her mad. (Emphatic particle)
Scope of *only* → make her mad (VP)
- (15) I'd love to go, *only* I'm too busy. (Adversative conjunction)
Scope of *only* → I'm too busy (Clause)

The same observation is obtained in French examples. In French *seulement*

examples, exclusive adverb *seulement* likes to have NP as scope. In emphatic function, the scope of *seulement* is VP. And when it is used as adversative conjunction, the scope is a clause.

- (16) Il boit *seulement* de l'eau. 'He drinks only water.'
 Scope → de l'eau (NP)
- (17) Il vient *seulement* d'arriver. 'He just arrived.'
 Scope → vient d'arriver (VP)
- (18) Tu peux aller le voir, *seulement* ne reste pas trop longtemps.
 'You may go to see him, but don't stay too long.'
 Scope → ne reste pas trop longtemps (Clause)

Why is it that in many languages the same word such as *tasol*, *only*, *seulement* functions as 'exclusive particle', 'emphatic particle' and 'adversative' functions? Why identical syntactic preference of scope is seen in several languages? It has been pointed out that there is a close inter-relationship between exclusive particles and adversative conjunctions (König 1988, 1991). However, this inter-relationship has been neither described nor discussed precisely.

Table 1 below compares the pragmatic functions of three functions of *tasol*. The three functions have overlapping semantic/pragmatic features. More specifically, between exclusive particle and adversative conjunctions, the only difference is whether the negation of non-focused part is an assertion or an implication. I consider that such semantic/pragmatic overlap reinforce the reanalysis of the structures and eventually promote semantic extension together with the syntactic ambiguity.

(19) Table 1: Semantic/pragmatic overlap among three functions of *tasol*

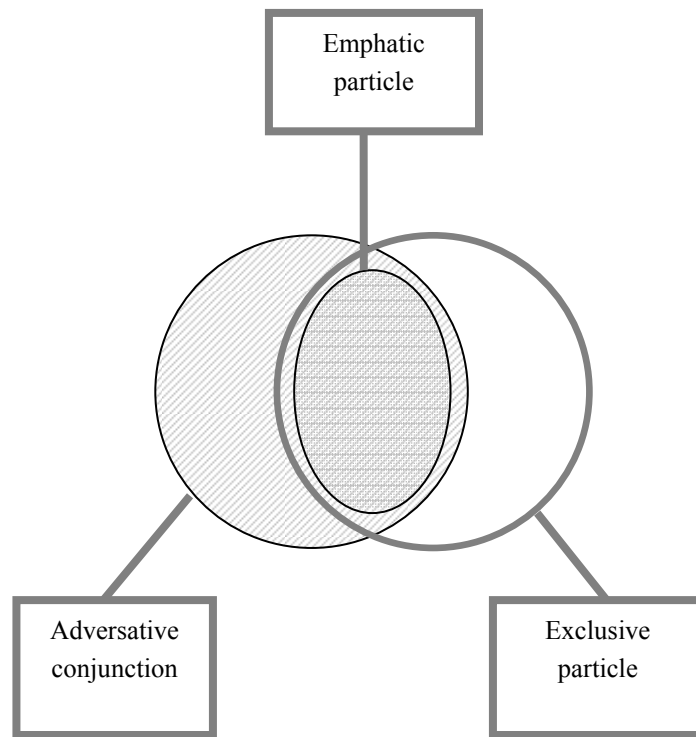
	Exclusive particle	Emphatic particle	Adversative conj.
Affirmation of focused	Assertion	Assertion	Assertion
Negation of non-focused	Implication	N/A	Assertion
The finite set of values	Implication	N/A	Implication

Figure 1 below is the representation of the pragmatic overlap of the word *tasol*. This diagram is employed to visually illustrate semantic overlap and pragmatic relations among the senses of *tasol*. Three circles stand for adversative conjunction, emphatic particle, and exclusive particle respectively. Transparent part means it is an implication rather than an assertion. The space that are filled with lines are for

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the asserted part. When there is something focused (smaller circle) and there is a finite set of values (the bigger circle) for the items that can be focused, we tend to capture the contrast between the focused part and non-focused part. This diagram reveals the parallel of logical domain and spatial cognition to capture the focused vs. non-focused feature. When a finite set of values (big circle) exists, exclusive affirmation of focused part (small circle) always entails the negation of the non-focused part (small inner gray circle) and the two parts contrast each other.

(20) Figure 1: Diagram of the pragmatic overlap among the senses of *tasol*



My argument in the present paper is based on the synchronic multifunctionality of the particle *tasol*. Several aspects of the particle *tasol* are remained to be studied in the future. Close examination of attestations of the word *tasol* in early texts of Tok Pisin should support the empirical evidence. Possible influence from substrate languages (Tolai and other Austronesian languages of the South-Western Pacific) and possible influence from the other superstrate language (German) should also be examined. For this point, according to Heine and Kuteva (2005), Jenkins (2002) discussed the case of *tasol* in Tok Pisin as an instance of replica grammaticalization whereby the use of restrictive adverbs is extended to serve as adversative clause

markers. Replica grammaticalization is a grammaticalization process that is transferred from the model language to the replica language. Heine and Kuteva (2005) argued that the Austronesian language Tigak has functionally equivalent form *kisang* which served as a model of Tok Pisin *tasol*. Although the role of substrate language may be playing an important role, the pragmatic analysis still provides the explanation why certain structures are more often replicated than others.

3. Conclusion

I argue that fine grained pragmatic analysis explains possible path for diachronic semantic change (exclusive particle to adversative conjunction). Based on the synchronic multifunctionality of the particle *tasol*, I propose the reanalysis scenario about the multifunctionality of the particle *tasol* in Tok Pisin. It was both syntactic and pragmatic factors that motivate reanalysis. The first is reanalysis of sentence boundaries according to ambiguity of the scope. Since the particle *tasol* is postposed to its scope, in certain contexts, the scope could be ambiguous whether it is argument, predicates or proposition. The other factor is pragmatic: in certain contexts, the pragmatic function of exclusive expressions and adversative expressions can be evaluated as equivalent. This is due to the fact that where a finite set of values is implicated, exclusive affirmation of focused values always entails the negation of non-focused values.

List of abbreviations

Eng.	English	NP	Noun Phrase
VP	Verb Phrase	Conj.	Conjunction

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