The emergence and development of epistemic markers

This project will investigate the emergence and development of epistemic markers in English by using the Entrenchment-and-Conventionalization-Model (EC-Model, Schmid, 2020). Even though there has been quite an uptake in studies regarding pragmatic markers in recent years, most studies deal only with the most prototypical markers, i.e., highly frequent, relatively short markers usually derived from single lexemes (Brinton 2008: 1). Longer, more clause-like pragmatic markers have received far less attention. Such markers originate from fully compositional clauses, yet over the course of their history develop into fixed chunks, whose components have become semantically bleached while the whole chunk has gained metacommunicative or discursive function. This development can be described using the concept of usualization, i.e., a process that "establishes—in the case of innovations—and continually sustains and adapts conventionalized utterance types as […] regularities of behaviour among the members of a community" (Schmid 2020: 93). Usualization involves four aspects, namely symbolization, which is concerned with how form maps onto meaning and meaning onto form, paradigmaticalization, which is concerned with functional and/or formal oppositions between utterance types, syntagmaticalization, which is concerned with the linear order of components of utterance types and contextualization, which is concerned with the cotext and context of utterance types (Schmid 2020: 93).

Three studies are planned as part of this project: A study on the emergence and development of the epistemic marker *not gonna lie*, a marker which has gained popularity somewhat recently, a study on the emergence and development of the epistemic marker *truth be told*, a more established and conventional marker, a study dealing specifically with the process of paradigmaticalization, i.e., the effects an emerging marker has on a network of functionally similar markers. The data for these studies will be taken from two large-scale corpora of the English language, the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA, Davies, 2008–), which features around 1 billion words from 1990 to 2019 and the *Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA, Davies, 2008–), comprising about 500 million words from 1830 to 2019.

References:
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