

# English filler *you know*: an approach from relevance-theoretic account

Daisuke YAMADA

## 1 Introduction

It was Grice (1975/89) who pioneered the importance of inference in language communication. The aspects of utterance interpretation, which are explained by Grice by using the cooperative principle and its maxims, have been explained through the concept of inference, distinguishing ‘what is said’ from implicature in conversations. On the other hand, relevance theory as a cognitive pragmatic theory attempts to reveal the works of mind-reading abilities in human language communications and proposes an utterance interpretation hypothesis. That is, it takes a status of supposing our human cognitive system has the principle of relevance. This tries to keep the optimal balance between processing efforts of interpretations and the worth of accessible information, thus the inference controlled by its principle achieves human utterance interpretation. Relevance theory is a pragmatic principle of how human cognitive processes are explainable in utterance interpretation. Accordingly, the existence of semantics, which operates closely with human cognitive process, can be considered in utterance interpretation.

This research focuses on language filler *you know*, which is used as link between utterances as in (1). Look at example (1), which is used utterance-

initially with another filler *well*. Without using such fillers as in (1c), the hearer, or Mary, probably can understand what Tom wants to tell, but more natural communication can be done with using them. Of course, because nuances between the uses of *you know* and *well* are also different with comparison of (1a) and (1b), both meanings are probably different.

- (1) Tom: I'm going to get the tickets.  
 Mary: The tickets?  
 Tom: (a) **You know**, the circus tickets.  
       (b) **Well**, the circus tickets.  
       (c) The circus tickets.

What this research attempts to discuss is how the filler *you know* works with the frame work of relevance theory. What will be presented here is as follows; (i) the filler *you know* is language information which constraints on procedural meaning of utterances, (ii) it contributes to a higher-level explicature of speaker's utterance. Finally, (iii) will examine (i) and (ii), and a semantic meaning of *you know* as a unitary account will be proposed by using the concept of metarepresentation. In the next chapter, three previous works will be examined, which is all analysed the filler *you know*. In Chapter 3, various appearances of *you know* will be presented, which are extracted from the BNC database. Chapter 4 will explain the concept of relevance theory, which is the theoretical framework in this research. Taking into consideration the concept of metarepresentation, Chapter 5 will propose a semantic meaning of *you know* as a unitary account with a comparison of Blakemore's (2002) *well* discussion. Finally, the data presented in Chapter 3 will demonstrate how the unitary account is organised. This research would like to show that such a tiny language factor will greatly effect on human communication. In the next chapter, we attempt to get an insider's

view of previous studies, which discuss the filler *you know*.

## 2 Literature review

There have not been any previous studies discussing the filler *you know* from relevance-theoretic perspectives as of yet. The previous studies presented here are all from other related fields. This paper mainly focuses on three studies; Crystal and Davy (1975), Schffrin (1987), Holmes (1986, 1995). These three studies each discuss the filler *you know* from a different perspective; Crystal and Davy discussed the filler *you know* as a *softener* based on intonation changes. Schffrin focused on the meaning of *you know* compared with the filler *I mean*, and Holmes discussed the filler *you know* as having ambiguous meanings. Examining these studies in detail, we can see how the meaning and function of the filler *you know* has been treated.

### 2.1 Crystal and Davy (1975)

The main purpose of Crystal and Davy's (1975) discussion is to show that phrases such as *you know* and *sort of* have a function as softening utterances or discourses. They called such phrases *softeners*. The analysis of *softener* is based on intonation changes. As a function of linking, such *softeners* as *you know* and *sort of* are employed with intonation changes. Crystal and Davy also discussed the place of appearance; especially concerning the filler *you know*, and then classified into sentence-initial, medial, and final. It is best to see their research from these two aspects.

#### 2.1.1 As a softener

As a *softener*, Crystal and Davy gave examples as *you know*, *you see*, *I mean*, *mind you*, and *yes/no*. They classified them as softening connectives. Concerning the filler *you know*, they discussed it with the place of

appearance; on sentence-initial, medial, and final. Depending on its place of appearance, they discussed that the functions (and meanings) of the filler *you know* would change. The analysis as *softener* is based on Quirk et al. (1972). They treated it as *comment clauses*, and defined it as follow.

- (2) Comment clauses are somewhat loosely related to the rest of the clause they belong to, and may be classes as disjuncts or conjuncts. In general, they may occur initially, or medially, and they have a separate tone unit. Quirk et al. (1972, 778)

Concerning the discussion of softener *you know*, they treat it as a main clause, and gave the example see in (3).

- (3) Like a main clause  
At that time, *I believe*, labour was cheap.

The filler *you know* is discussed as if it was part of main clause in sentence (that is, having the same nature as (3)). The comment clauses here are not only *you know* but also including other phrases such as *I know*, *I see*, *I suppose*, *I'm afraid*, *you know*, *remember*, *one hears*, *they tell me*, *God knows*, and *it is claimed* (Quirk et al. 1972, 778). Observing Quirk et al.'s analysis as comment clauses, it would appear that there may not be many differences from the analysis of *softeners* by Crystal and Davy. Needless to say, it is quite natural that one would like to convey additional meanings of such fillers but these meanings have not been discussed at all. At any rate, it can easily be seen that Crystal and Davy's analysis was based on the *comment clause* analysis, but they conducted it in greater detail from intonation changes. There might be some relations between the filler *you know* and its intonation changes in sentences.

### 2.1.2 *You know* with intonation changes

Crystal and Davy (1975) insist that the difference of intonation changes could effect the meaning itself of *you know*, shown in (4):

- (4) a. you | know | he | works on SÙNdays |  
 b. you | know he 'works on SÙNdays | .

(Crystal and Davy 1975, 92)

Both (4a) and (4b) have the same proposition, but depended on the place of intonation, the word *you know* is treated as filler in (4a), while *you know* in (4b) is one of the propositions in the sentence. Not only with (4) but other appearances as well, Crystal and Davy explain how *you know* occurs with other positions as explained in 2.1.1. If a speaker uttering certain *you know* clause such as (14), the hearer could acknowledge the filler *you know* or not.

The worthy discussion point of Crystal and Davy's intonation based study is, first and foremost, they classified the positions of appearance into three parts. Setting aside the problem of its function as *softener*, it is very worth while to take this research into consideration. The position of the filler *well* is said to be more restricted than the filler *you know* (see 5.2.1).

The problems are, firstly, that the meaning as *softener* is not explained perfectly, especially its meaning and function. Secondly, which may be the most serious problem, is that the judgements of intonation changes are not perfectly equal for any native speakers, which can be proved with native speaker's judgements <sup>(1)</sup>. It might be helpful to discuss intonation changes of

1 The judgement of intonation changes by native speaker has not been consistent: even if a short sentence such as (14), some native speakers of English answer it is going up, others reply it is still flat. Other sentences given in Chapter 3 can be not also judged consistently, throughout data collection. Accordingly, it can be predicted that only native speaker's judgement cannot obtained the proper data (refer to 3.1), and moreover intonation changes is not helpful to explain the use of *you know*.

the filler *you know* as a softener, but it is quite risky for native speakers to make a judgement the only meanings with only intonation changes.

## 2.2 Schiffrin (1987)

Schiffrin's approach analyses the filler *you know* with *I mean*, and defines the meaning of *you know* as a marker of interactive transitions in shared knowledge as follow.

- (5) "the functions of *I mean* and *you know* are complementary: whereas *I mean* focuses on the speaker's own adjustments in the production of his/her own talk, *you know* proposes that a hearer adjust his/her orientation (specifically, knowledge and attention) toward the reception of another's talk." (Schiffrin 1987, 309)

According to her words, this suggests that combinations such as *you know* and *I mean*, may actually accomplish virtually the same interactive task, albeit in the opposite order. She proposed both meanings shown in figure (6) below.

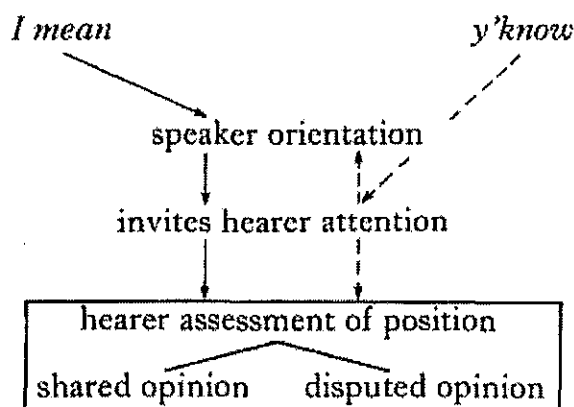


Figure (6): Schiffrin (1987, 310)

At first glance, figure (6) could precisely express both functions. The major difference between them is that *you know* is used to invite hearer attention,

while *I mean* is from speaker orientation. However, there are two problems with this explanation. First of all, the difference between shared knowledge and disputed opinion (shown in the figure as well) are not explained. It's highly doubtful that they need to be divided into two categories. The discussion was not mentioned the reason for this. If we explain this knowledge or information with relevance-theoretic approach, they are relevant information between the speaker and hearers, and can be obtained from participant's encyclopaedic knowledge information. The second problem, which is the worst fault, is that the judgement of the filler *you know*. Let us consider two sentences (7) and (8), which both are introduced in the discussion of the filler *you know* by Schiffrin.

- (7) Zelda: **You know** that took care of Henry when he had his back?  
(Schiffrin 1987, 271)
- (8) Zelda: D- **you know** the teams.  
Irene: Oh, Wha'd'y'mean the kids. (Schiffrin 1987, 272)

The treatment such uses of *you know* is not permitted in these sentences as fillers, because they are a part of the proposition on each sentence. The use of *you know* in sentence (7) is interrogative. It can be considered that this sentence is a kind of omission of the auxiliary verb "Do" on the head. The use in (8) is also difficult to treat as the filler *you know* as well, the same reason as in (7). Such sentences show the possibility that *you know* is not always used as filler. To prevent such kinds of confusion, this research set up a criterion (see 3.1) divided the filler *you know* into separate classifications.

### 2.3 Holmes (1986, 1995)

Holmes (1986) focused on the basic meanings of the filler *you know* by placing it into two categories certainty and uncertainty. In 1995, she did

another study exploring the difference between women's and men's speech from politeness perspectives <sup>(2)</sup>. The concept of expressing certainty has three further meanings; conjoint knowledge, emphatic, and attributive. She explained them as follows (9).

(9)

Conjoint knowledge: The speaker uses *you know* almost literally to introduce what she regards as incontestable mutual knowledge, to refer to the fact that the speaker knows the addressee already knows the information being asserted in the proposition.

Emphatic: To emphasize, intensify, or boost the strength of the speech act, to stress the speaker's confidence and hence reassure the addressee concerning the validity of the proposition asserted (There is no assumption that the addressee already knows the information being asserted).

Attributive: To express the speaker's certainty concerning the validity of the proposition and also express the speaker's confidence that addressee knows, as a result of past experience.

(Holmes 1986)

---

2 Holmes (1995) has developed the argumentation of *you know* with politeness theoretic perspectives. Through data collection from New Zealand society, the functions (and meanings) of *you know* has discussed and are divided into two aspects; affective meaning (also as positive politeness) and referential meaning. She discusses *you know* with approach of Ostman (1981, 39-41). He discusses it with the terms of Coherence level and Politeness-Modality level. The study of Holmes (1995) is originally from its various meanings in Holmes (1986, 1990) to discuss them from its meanings. Dixon and Foster (1997) also discusses the filler *you know* as a hedge, based from Holmes's approach.



The emphatic use has a tendency which it often appears on the sentence-final and medial. Expressing uncertainty has only two sub-categorised meanings: appealing and linguistic imprecision as in (10).

(10)

Appealing: To express the speaker's uncertainty lack of confidence.

Linguistic imprecision: To express the speaker's uncertainty concerning aspects of the linguistic expression of the proposition.

(i) Signalling lexical imprecision

(ii) Introducing / qualifying information

(iii) Indicating False Start

(Holmes 1986)

The use of appealing often comes at the sentence-final. As Lakoff (1975, 54) proposed, the appealing use of the filler *you know* may often be used by women than by men, and it gives the impression that the speaker lacks authority or doesn't know what he is talking about.

Regarding linguistic imprecision use, she classified this into three further categories, shown in (i) to (iii) in (10).

Generally, Holmes takes the position that the filler *you know* has various meanings. The root of its ambiguous meanings is based on two kinds of categories: certainty and uncertainty. Holmes explained these two main distinctions as follows.

(11) I found two broad categories that proved valuable, one expressing speaker confidence or certainty, the other reflecting uncertainty of various kinds. (Holmes 1986, 7)

Holmes did not explain this in detail. It is quite difficult to see why she divided them into two categories as in (11). Meanings presented by Holmes have not covered all uses, however (for instance, examples such as (23) and (24), which will be referred in Chapter 3, had not discussed in this category). It cannot be concluded that Holmes's study is well-organised even if this research permits the ambiguous meanings. Nevertheless, this study might be a kind of trigger for making argumentation of *you know*, especially concerning its presentation of meanings.

We have seen the filler *you know* argumentations from three different fields. On the whole, it would be hard to say that each research perfectly explained the meanings the filler *you know* has, if compared to all appearances of *you know* in Chapter 3. Particularly, no study has discussed example (24) before. From the presentation and arguments from each research, however, there can be seen as follows: (a) The nature of *you know* when in its places of appearance, (b) the fact that it has many meanings, or is ambiguous meanings, (c) and the reliability of native speaker's judgement (refer to 3.1). Taking these ideas or making use of them, this research will be proposed a meaning of *you know* with relevance-theoretic account. Before that, we need to set up a criterion about data collection, and present various appearances of the filler *you know*.

### **3 Data collection of the filler *you know***

#### **3.1 Data from the British National Corpus**

The method of collecting data is one of the most important issues to consider before discussing the filler *you know*. The combination of the BNC database and grammatical judgment by native speakers of English, which we are attempting to achieve here, will be strengthened by the reliability of the data we need to use.

Two processes have been arranged for data collection of the filler *you know* (See Appendix A). The first step is mainly about data collection (or sentence collection) from the BNC, and the second is about context formation from these extracted sentences which are worthwhile in discussing the filler *you know* through pragmatics based research.

The main point of the first step is to consider how properly the filler *you know* data can be collected from the BNC database. Needless to say, it can be predicted that all data on this form of words extracted from the database cannot be classified as a filler. It is possible that other non-filler factors such as ‘*do you know ...*’ in interrogative sentences or ‘*... you know it*’, ‘*... you know what I mean*’ in declarative sentences can be obtained. Obviously, they cannot be treated as the filler *you know*. Nevertheless, even if we could obtain the filler *you know* from the BNC, in some of the sentences it is not possible to judge whether they are a filler or not at first glance, as given in (14). This may lead to misleading data collection, which will then affect the argumentation itself. Consequently, we have to set up a criterion for the methodology of data collection of *you know* sentences.

What we need to consider the most here is, as the first step, whether all *you know* sentences as a filler can be included into their attached propositions. A filler can be defined as a part of speech that usually has no grammatical connection to the rest of the sentence, which is to say that there is no grammatical connection to the proposition of the sentence. If we can consider that they are included, then they are not fillers because they cannot be judged to be the filler *you know*. *You know* sentences, which are included in declarative and interrogative sentences, and some fixed forms composed with *you know*, such as “*as you know*” or “*as long as you know*”, are good examples. If we cannot consider that *you know* sentences are not included when that expression is attached to propositions, it might be possible to say that they are all the filler *you know*. This is the first

process in establishing these criteria (The result is in Appendix B-1).

It is clear that we cannot obtain the proper data if we carry out only the first criterion above. As seen in the first step, all *you know* clauses, which are placed outside of their propositions, can be treated as fillers, and conversely, *you know* clauses within propositions are not always classified as fillers. (12) is one good example, which is the same sentence as (4):

(12) **You know** he works on Sunday.

Needless to say, when we take *you know* sentences from the BNC, the context and structures in which the sentences are uttered are not explained or referred to at all. That is, only plain sentences can be accessed. So, in the case of such sentences as in (12) it is quite difficult to make judgements whether the clause *you know* is a filler or other factor in declarative sentences; in “*do you know* ...” for instance, “*you*” would be a subject and “*know*” a verb of the sentence (12). But, even in (12), if we understand the context in which the sentence (12) is uttered, even if a non-native speaker of English, we can probably understand the nature that *you know* sentences have. Hence, grammatical judgement and the context formation by native speakers of English would be needed concerning such *you know* sentences. This is the basis of the second step.

The second step is about grammatical judgment and context formation by native speakers of English. As seen above, all *you know* sentences cannot always be classified as smoothly as in (12). In some sentences it is necessary to be dependent on grammatical judgement by native speakers. This is the second step in this research, and the process will be established in two stages (referred to as 2-1 and 2-2 below in Appendix A).

The first judgement process in the second step (2-1) is about the context formation of *you know* sentences. All obtained sentences from the BNC and

previous studies are classified as the filler *you know* from the first step as in Appendix B-1 and B-2. As we know however, they are just plain sentences and no contexts are attached. Hence, what we need to focus on the most here is about setting up the contexts in which *you know* sentences are uttered, and their meanings. According to the positions of *you know* clauses (sentence-initial, medial, and final), and along with their meanings, each context will be derived as in Appendix B-3. These *you know* utterances which are composed in the context of their supposed utterances are presented to native speakers of English. First of all we ask one native speaker of British English to make a judgment whether the filler *you know* utterances are acceptable. Then, all utterances are classified according to whether they are acceptable, non-acceptable, or others (which is a difficult judgement to make).

Needless to say, it is natural that grammatical judgement by native speakers needs to be performed with many speakers to provide proof of their acceptability as the filler *you know*. To do so, we asked more than 10 British English speakers, or English speakers living in the United Kingdom, for further grammatical judgement concerning these utterances. This is the second judgement (2-2). In the same way as the first grammatical judgement with one native speaker, we ask for the acceptability of these *you know* utterances and their meanings. At the same time, in accordance with Crystal and Davy's (1975) study, we ask about intonation changes such as rising, falling or flat. This may be one of the means by which to reveal something about the nature of the filler *you know*.

All speakers might say that a *you know* utterance is not acceptable, but even if one native speaker chooses that the utterance can be acceptable we need to be able to make an argument for it as a filler. In this way, the *you know* sentences as filler can be used as example sentences.

It has often been said that the intuition of native speakers is extremely

obscure. Corpus data is also not perfect for discussion in the field of pragmatics, as mentioned above. However, the intuition of native speakers will be helpful in making these judgments in context. So, it is possible that we can obtain more natural data through a combination of grammatical judgement and corpus data collection. For this reason, this research performed data collection and used the results in argumentation.

### 3.2 Various appearances of the filler *you know*

Taking into consideration all BNC data, we can see almost all use of *you know*. To attempt to present a unitary account of *you know* as a semantic meaning, we need to look into the various uses of *you know* and present a criteria to present *you know* as a filler. According to it, this research presents all data here. First of all, let us look at an example from Crystal and Davy (1995) of utterance-initial use.

(13) [Talking about the tickets they are going to obtain]

Tom: I'm going to get the tickets.

Mary: The tickets?

Tom: **You know**, the circus tickets.

(Modified from Crystal and Davy 1975, 93)

Concerning Mary's question about what type of tickets Tom is talking about, Tom attempts to assert that the ticket they are talking about now is for the circus. If Tom does not use the filler *you know*, Mary might be able to understand what Tom wants to convey to her, however, by using the filler the conversation is much natural and the hearer is able to understand better the speaker's intention. In this way, it is understandable that such the tiny expression can have some effects between a speaker and hearer's interaction. This use of *you know* occurs on utterance-initial, but also can

occur on sentence-final or medial. Crystal and Davy (1995) discusses the filler *you know* as divided into three positions. This research is based on aspect of Crystal and Davy's filler position argument.

The use of *you know* on utterance initial in (13) possibly has an intention of a speaker to assert to the hearer. The use of *you know* on sentence-initial does have a meaning of assertion. The use in (14), which is different from the use (13), might not have the meaning of the speaker's assertion.

- (14) A: I may catch a cold, and need some medicine.  
 B: **You know**, they say an apple a day keeps the doctor away? (Schiffrin 1987, 275)

Suppose that the speaker's friends are talking about effects of medicine when they have a cold. Speaker B utters *you know* clause to say a related idea. This time, there is a possibility that not only the speaker but the hearers should know this kind of proverb as their knowledge as well. The speaker tries to use in the already known information as knowledge of the conversation between them, using the filler *you know*. The use of the filler *you know* may have a function such as activator between their knowledge and already known information. One may see this utterance as interrogative, but actually it is not. It would appear that the fillers *you know* in (14) are both used by the speaker try to bring in something new information to the conversation.

The uses of *you know* in (15)-(16) are slightly different from that above:

- (15) [Concerning a question about relation between the two]  
 I thought that we were friends like. **You know**, like boyfriend and girlfriend. (BNC, Billy Bayswater 1990)

(16) [A, talking with friend B]

A: It was the first time I entered the music room.

B: Which room?

A: **You know**, that lovely room with its medieval instruments.

(BNC, Tomorrow 1991)

Example (15) and (16) are both include sentence-initial use of *you know*. The speaker in (15) would like to assert that 'they are friends but it is not just friends, rather more special relation like lovers'. Using the filler *you know* on the head of the latter utterance as a trigger, the speaker wants to give a more concrete explanation. Example (16) can be explained the same way as (15), as an introduction of a concrete explanation. The speaker A, who has entered the music room before, wants the hearer to identify the room, and then he tries to introduce some of the features about it. These uses of *you know* are a fair bit different from the former sentence-initial uses, because of speaker's assertion and introducing new information uses. They might be able to be captured as 'presenting (or adding) concrete example uses'. From collecting all data here, we consider that the sentence-initial use of *you know* has mainly three meanings.

The use of *you know* appears on sentence-medial as well, and has four meaning; introducing new information, presenting (or adding) concrete example, speaker's assertion, and reconfirmation. Sentence (17) and (18) show introducing new information and a presenting (or adding) concrete example.

(17) [Billy tells his daughter, Marie]

Billy: I suppose if you work at night you got to sleep during the day. Marie used to do that when I met her – **you know**, sleep all day and then go out at night.



(BNC, Billy Bayswater 1990)

(18) [Talking about TV programme with friends]

It isn't really like ballet, but it looks sort of real – **you know**, like  
Candid Camera. (BNC, Billy Bayswater 1990)

As in sentence (17), the speaker has an intention that wants the hearer to know somewhat new information about his daughter with the use of *you know*. What the speaker wants to assert on *you know* clause here (*you know*, sleep all day and then go out at night) is to present new information about his daughter. We can consider that this is one of the good examples of informing new information. In sentence (18), the speaker utters the sentence with the filler *you know* to attempt to refer to more concrete information than the former sentence (here, it looks sort of real). The proposition of the latter clause (like Candid Camera) starts with *like*. *You know* is also a kind of a marker for introducing concrete information. Both the filler *you know* and preposition *like* may have similar functions or share a function together <sup>(3)</sup>. Without *you know* on the head of latter utterance, the hearer can understand what the speaker intends to say. By adding the filler there, however, we may be able to see some additional intentions smoothly such as speaker's assertion that the speaker wants to convey to the hearer. Among utterance-medial use of *you know*, the meaning of speaker's assertion is also acceptable. Let us look at sentence (19):

(19) A: I suppose that it's summer in New Zealand now.

B: Yes it is. **But/ However, you know**, the weather is not  
much better than here at the moment.

---

3 In fact, by extracting from the BNC data base, many the filler *you know* data combined with proposition *like* is available.

(Modified from Blakemore 2002, 96)

(20) [Mariana bowls out Trent for any reason]

I'm not useless, **you know**, and you can't do everything on your own.  
(BNC, Alistair MacLean's golden girl 1992)

This is the example when Blakemore (2002) discussed discourse markers *but* and *however*. As an appearance on sentence-medial use of *you know*, this use is also quite natural. By adding this filler on this sentence, the hearer might see that the speaker B wants to convey some additional information. The use of *you know* might hide the speaker's implicit intention. The intention here might be an assertion from the speaker. In case of (20), the speaker wants to confirm the speaker's feeling to the hearer with the use of *you know*. If *you know* is not used, the utterance itself in the context is somewhat odd. Sentence (20) may be a typical example which expresses the speaker's reconfirmation.

Thirdly and finally, we would like to see the sentence-final use of *you know*. There are two kinds of meanings here; speaker's assertion and reconfirmation. Let us look at example (21):

(21) [Speaker looks at Dorothy, who does not look good feeling]

A: What's going on Dorothy? What has been happening?  
You look really pale, **you know**.

(BNC, Part of the furniture 1991)

Speaker has an intention to want to assert something strongly that has in mind. The speaker may want to worry about Dorothy's physical condition.

On the other hand, there is another use of *you know*, which appears on the end of sentences. Let us look at (22):

- (22) A: Do you know him?  
B: I know Ian. He looks very handsome now. He is an actor,  
**you know**?  
A: Yeah, his eyes are a very nice colour.

(Modified form BNC, The meddlers 1970)

*You know* utterances in (22) might not be used for speaker's assertion of the sentence's contents, or for confirmation or agreement to hearers. Speaker B uses the filler *you know* to emphasise that Ian is an actor.

The appearances of *you know* occurs on various places such as sentence-initial, medial, and final. It is surely possible, however, that they would occur more than twice in the same sentence as in (23).

- (23) [Looking at a friend who is riding a horse for the first time]

**You know**, he loops up on the horse, **you know**.

(BNC, Appreciation of literature 1950)

Sentence (23) shows the use of *you know* use on the utterance-initial and final. Although each of its uses appears on the same utterance, each meaning might be intuitively different. It may be proof that there are more than two meanings and is possibly ambiguous, depending on its position in the sentence.

As in (24), different from its other uses, the filler *you know* is used alone. Other uses normally associates with sentences, but this kind of utterance is also acceptable.

- (24) A: What did you say?  
B: Oh, **you know**.  
A: What?

B: Just, I wanted to ask what your family was like.

This use of *you know* has never been discussed before, but from relevance-theoretic perspective, this research tries to consider it along side the other appearances in a unitary account.

As we have seen, the tiny filler *you know* has various appearances, which can be in different positions and have particular meanings or functions. In the next chapter, the fundamental framework in this research will be presented.

## 4 Relevance theory

### 4.1 Principle of relevance

The fundamental concept of relevance theory, which is initially introduced by Sperber and Wilson (1986/95<sup>(4)</sup>) is that all human utterances are based on a basic assumption, which all cognitive acts are from what humans interpret their acts each other. Human cognition is geared towards the maximization of relevance. We pay attention only the information being relevant, and deal with information within this context, and therefore, our cognitive environment is expected to be improved by us. If newly obtained information gives a proof to the truthfulness of a previously obtained assumption, the assumption will be reinforced. Or, if the assumption is contradicted, it will be discarded and replaced with a new assumption. If new information is connected with the already obtained information, we can obtain a further new assumption as a result of an interaction of the two assumptions. If the improvement of cognitive environment is defined as cognitive effect, the greater the effects we can obtain, the larger the relevance of obtained information. Relevance theory defines the relationship between the human

---

4 The first edition was published in 1986.

cognitive system and information interaction as the Cognitive Principle of Relevance shown in (25).

(25) **First or Cognitive Principle of Relevance:**

Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance. (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 262)

To obtain the cognitive effect, efforts in dealing with information are required. If being able to obtain the same effects, we desire to communicate with minimum effort. An utterance should be relevant to a receiver, so accordingly, the speaker has intentions there are some rewards to the receiver and requests mentally his efforts. On the other hand, the hearer expects some reward for cognitive effects, so he attempts to do utterance interpretation. This is the second principle, which is called the Communicative Principle of Relevance shown in (26):

(26) **Second or Communicative Principle of Relevance:**

Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

(Sperber and Wilson 1995, 271)

Humans normally pay attention to relevant stimuli, so it is quite natural that the speaker utters relevant utterances enough to be worthwhile to paying an attention to the hearer. Accordingly, if the speaker attracts hearer's attention and her ostensive intention is clarified to him, the hearer will be guaranteed to be the relevant level from speaker's ostensive stimulus (or utterances). On the other hand, the ostensive utterance is an interpretation that (a) being relevant to worth while to paying attention to hearer and also (b) being the most relevant along with the capacity and interest of language

participants. This is called ‘optimally relevant’ interpretation. If the speaker’s expectation of optimal relevance governs every kinds of ostensive utterance interpretation, the speaker chooses a linguistic form which the hearer can recover easily and moreover expects to accomplish the satisfactory effects to the hearer. This is an interpretation which the hearer can obtain with the least effort, that is to say, the speaker’s intended interpretation. Hearer is led to explore minimum effort, so if the interpretation accessed immediately satisfies the hearer’s relevance, the interpreting process will end there.

#### **4.2 Conceptual and procedural encoding**

One of the main distinctions is the conceptual and procedural encoding of language. Many natural languages have mentally encoded information, and make up its logical form. The output of this language module is conceptual representation. Blakemore (1987) firstly introduced the idea that, however, there is language information which encodes inferential process, not involved in representation. This type of language information is encoded a procedural meaning, which is specialised for indicating the inferential route to hearers. The existence of this information would be along with the speaker’s intention to accomplish the intended effects with minimum effort. So, information which can constrain the computation process is considered to involve in saving the efforts. This is the basis of distinction between the conceptual and procedural encoding in utterances.

Almost all linguistic expressions encode conceptual information. According to Blakemore’s (1987, 1992) explanation, consider the concept of languages encoding procedural information.

- (27) a. Peter is not stupid.  
 b. He can look up words in the dictionary.

As interpreting (27), it is quite clear that the speaker has intention between two utterances. However, speaker's intention cannot be conveyed to the hearer all the time. For instance, (27a) would be a premise or proof of (27b), or we could think that (27b) is a premise and (27b) is conclusion. If there is language information between two utterances to indicate an inference to hearer, it will be quite helpful to interpret (27). As Blakemore's (1987, 85-91) explanation, so given in (28) and *after all* in (29) are both along with this function.

- (28) a. Peter is not stupid.  
       b. **So** he can look up words in the dictionary.
- (29) a. Peter is not stupid.  
       b. **After all** he can look up words in the dictionary.

The use of *so* presents that (28b) is dealt with conclusion of (28a), and *after all* also presents that (29b) is dealt with proof of (29a). In every kinds of utterance, there is no limit the crossing between the obtained contextual affects and derived cognitive effects. Accordingly, the speaker highlights the specific inference relation in using such expressions as *so* and *after all*, and imposes constraints the hearer's inference on the utterance interpreting process. Hence, they make the range of the speaker's inference narrower. An intended relation between these two utterances is presented to hearer. This constraint makes the hearer's processing cost lower and is supposed to be able to obtain the proper effects. It is quite well-organised inferential process mechanism. The filler *you know* can be considered language information encoding a procedural meaning in later chapter.

### 4.3 Explicature and implicature of utterances

The concept between implicitness and explicitness in utterance

interpretations is also a fundamental distinction of relevance theory. It is the assertion that the constructing process of content of proposition with language expressions is highly decided pragmatically. In other words, this is the pragmatic distinction, which is an explicit-implicit distinction of utterances. This distinction is what degree a speaker put overtly on sentence or does not implicitly, when people attempts to put her thoughts on the linguistic form. Sperber and Wilson (1995) define the explicitness as follows;

(30) **Explicitness:**

An assumption communicated by an utterance U is explicit if and only if it is a development of a logical form encoded by U.

(Sperber and Wilson 1995, 82)

From this definition, they claim that the speaker's intended assumption belongs to either explicature, which is explicit contents of utterances, or implicature, which is implicit assumption (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 182). Explicature is the development of linguistic form encoding utterances. The linguistic form is the conceptual representation which conforms to its proposition expressed. The process which the hearer recovers from incomplete linguistic form is contained both (a) the (full) proposition and (b) the description of the speech act or propositional attitude of utterances. If taking this perspective, explicatures are derived from both linguistic encoding and pragmatic inference. On the other hand, the definition of implicature is somewhat negative; that is, all assumptions which are not explicature are defined as implicature. Let us demonstrate this distinction as in (31)-(33).

(31) A: How is Mary feeling after her first year at university?



B: She didn't get enough units and can't continue.

(32) Mary Jones didn't get enough university course units to qualify for second year study, and as a result, Mary cannot continue with university study.

(33) Mary Jones is not feeling at all happy about this.

(Carston 1988, 155)

It can be considered that explicature given in (32) and implicature in (33) can be conveyed to the hearer from B's utterance in (31). The explicature (32) is derived with decoding and pragmatic inference. However, (33) is an assumption which is not conveyed with explicature (32); in short, this is implicature of (31). Implicature is recovered only with inference.

However, the recovery of explicature is not only with the process of decoding and reference assignment. As Sperber and Wilson explain, utterances typically have several explicatures. For instance, Mary's reply to Bill's question in (34) might have several explicatures given in (35).

(34) Peter: Did your son visit you at the weekend?

Mary (happily): He did.

(35) a. Mary's son visited her at the week end.

b. Mary says that her son visited her at the weekend.

c. Mary believes that her son visited her at the weekend.

d. Mary is happy that her son visited her at the weekend.

(Carston 2000, 14; 2002, 119)

(35a) is, as we know, a (lower-level) explicature, and (35b)-(35d) are all higher-level explicatures. The explicature is that the proposition expressed pragmatically developed from the logical form which obtained by linguistic decoding of utterances. The higher-level explicature in (35b) is embedded

into the speech act scheme as '*Mary says that* \_\_\_', and (35c) and (35d) are embedded into the scheme of speaker's propositional attitudes of utterance, as '*Mary believes that* \_\_\_', and '*Mary is happy that* \_\_\_'. All explicatures in (35a)-(35d) are not always conveyed to the hearer. Based on the context of utterance, the hearer assumes only assumption to accomplish the cognitive efforts, which is enough to deal with the processing efforts. In Chapter 5, the filler *you know* will be discussed as a marker which contributes to the explicature, especially to higher-level explicature of the speaker's propositional attitude of utterance.

The procedural meaning of language expressions, by definition, never associates with the logical form of utterances, but effects on both explicit and implicit sides of utterances. On the other hand, the conceptual meaning relates on the logical form of utterances and constructs proposition<sup>5</sup> expressed, so consequently it concerns the explicit side of utterances. This distinction, which is between conceptual and procedural distinction (semantic distinction) and explicit and implicit distinction (pragmatic distinction), lead to a classification into three categories; (i) expressions which has conceptual meaning and contribute to explicit side of utterances, (ii) expressions which constraints to procedural meaning and contribute to explicit side of utterances, and then (iii) expressions which constraints to procedural meaning and contribute to implicit side of utterances. It can be considered that the filler *you know* (and *well*) would be classified into (ii) in Chapter 5.

#### **4.4 Metarepresentation**

Relevance theory considers that the starting point of communication by language is originally from interpretive use. The concept of interpretive use can be captured with comparison of the descriptive use. The descriptive use is what utterances represent an actual situation. It would be true if it

describes accurately, or it would be false if not accurate. We can consider that it is used for judging the truth. On the other hand, the interpretive use is the representation which represents from other utterances or thoughts. It focuses on faithfulness, which can be reconstructed from original representation. This is the use based from the concept of resemblance (Noh 2000; Wilson 2000).

All utterances are representations. The targeted representations are not always objective situations or thoughts of the speaker. That will be also representations that utterances and thoughts including the hearer or ideas which others people might be thinking. Relevance theory explains that all utterances are defined as 'descriptive' or 'interpretive' by the relation between speaker's interpretations and its representations. Consider (36):

(36) Frederick reproached Elizabeth. She had behaved inconsiderately.

(Wilson 2000, 412)

By understanding her utterance, the hearer in (36) might entertain a series of interpretations of the type in (37).

- (37) a. Frederick says that she had behaved inconsiderately.  
 b. Frederick believes that she had behaved inconsiderately.  
 c. The speaker says that Frederick believed that she had behaved inconsiderately.  
 d. The speaker believes that Frederick believed that she had behaved inconsiderately.

The second part of (36) has possible interpretations given in (37a) or (37b). Interpretation (37a) represents as a lower representation, which is it represents descriptively. This utterance is not the speaker's thought, just

adding the representation the speaker thinks true. On the other hand, (37b) is given the representation that the speaker believes true, but also presents the thought or opinion the speaker has. That is, it is metarepresented from lower representation as a thought of speaker's belief. In this way, when the speaker's thoughts are metarepresented, the interpretation adding representations is called 'the interpretive use'. Furthermore, interpretations (37c) and (37d) are used interpretively. The speaker knows there are thoughts which are different from her, and she interpreted third person's thoughts or ideas. That is to say, it is given representations to ideas of other people. From the reason that it is a representation of representation, it is called 'metarepresentation'.

Metarepresentation is an ability that attributes other ideas or thoughts. Interpretations (37c) and (37d) present one's idea or opinion. The speaker of (37c) represents words of another person, which is a different from her words, and (37d) represents the other's thoughts, as different from the speaker's thought. In this way, metarepresentation ability is considered to give representations as attributing to other people's opinions or thoughts. In relevance-theoretic account, when metarepresentation is used to manifest the speaker's assumption from lower representation, it is explained it is used as echoic. When utterances are used interpretably, the interpreting process cannot be seen covertly as in (37a). If Frederick says 'Elizabeth had behaved inconsiderately', the second utterance interpreted as in (37a), which is the representation from what Frederick said. The second utterance in (36) is enriched as presenting the same explicature as in (37a). Interpretations (37a)-(37d) are all what example (36) is enriched covertly to metarepresentation. That is, the speaker makes the hearer desired to be relevant construct the metarepresentation.

## 5 A meaning of *you know*

In this chapter, along with the framework of relevance theory presented in Chapter 4, a semantic meaning of *you know* will be proposed as a unitary meaning. Let us look back to example (1) again, which is the same as in the introduction.

- (1) Tom: I'm going to get the tickets.  
 Mary: The tickets?  
 Tom: (a) **You know**, the circus tickets.  
 (b) **Well**, the circus tickets.  
 (c) The circus tickets.

As seen in (1) from the introduction, both use of *well* and *you know* are acceptable and have the same grammatical function. Nevertheless, both meanings in each sentence are intuitively different. Each meaning could be argued in detail, but, it would appear that the speaker's intention would be obviously different if he attempts to use the filler *well* or *you know*.

To identify a meaning and function that the filler *you know* has, the property of *you know* in the relevance-theoretic approach should be clarified, along with Blakemore's (2002) approach to *well*. To do this, Blakemore's treatment of the filler *well* will be firstly clarified. She asserts that *well* is linguistic information that constrains procedural information and contributes to speaker's higher-level explicature. Along with her treatment of *well*, we attempt to continue to discuss *you know* as having the same category as *well*. As seen in (1), even if both *well* and *you know* are in same categories, these function and meanings are different. So, finally, the property of *you know* will be try to be identified with relevance-theoretic account. In particular, beyond Blakemore's *well* explanation and making use

of the concept of metarepresentation, the meaning of *you know* that the speaker has will be made clear. After proposing a semantic meaning of *you know* as a hypothesis, we will attempt to demonstrate this with all examples of *you know* presented in Chapter 3.

### 5.1 The meaning of *well*: Blakemore (2002) and Schourup (1999, 2001)

The process of presenting a semantic meaning of *well* by Blakemore (2002) is explained through the relevance theory. Blakemore's analysis proceeds with Schourup's (1999, 2001) <sup>(6)</sup>. Throughout the argument of *well*, the property of filler *you know* will be presented.

What we have to consider here is, first of all, that the filler *well* is language information which constrains to a procedural meaning. Among their discussion, the treatment of *well* as procedural constraints constituent is taken for granted (Blakemore 2002, 129-130). To further explore this meaning, let us look back at examples of discourse connective in Chapter 3. These discourse connectives force the hearer to make a pragmatic inference working between the antecedent and the following utterances, and to establish the connectively between them to relay a particular point to the hearer. Let us see (38) again:

- (38) A: Anna's much taller than Verity.  
 B: a. **Well**, she is two years older. (Blakemore 2002, 130)  
 b. **You know**, she is two years older.  
 c. She is two years older.

5 Jucker (1993) proposed the discourse marker *well* with relevance-theoretical account, and Klerk (2005) also discusses a procedural meaning of *well* in a corpus of Xhosa English. Both of them are discussed with Blakemore's idea of procedural encoding of utterances.

This example is originally used the case of *well*. It may also be acceptable when *you know* is used on Tom's utterance. Although a filler is not present in (38c), the hearer can understand B's utterance. As you know, the fillers *well* and *you know* have no concept at all. They do not contribute to the proposition expressed, but make the hearer have a certain inference. At this point, the filler *well*, as well as *you know*, is shown to be language information which constrains a procedural meaning, and they could be categorised into the same group as discourse connectives such as *but*, *after all*, and *so*. Along with the concept of conceptual and procedural distinction, Blakemore (2002) and Schourup (2001) insist that these discourse connectives and the filler *well* is a procedural constraints constituent, being different in nature even though both of the fillers encode procedural constraints. Discourse connectives such as *but*, *after all*, and *so* <sup>(6)</sup> have been treated as expressions which contribute to implicit aspects of utterances, but is it possible to treat the filler *well* in the same way?

- (39) A: I learnt three new words today.  
 B: **So?** (Schourup 2001, 1054)
- (40) A: I learnt three new words today.  
 B: **Well?**

According to Schourup (2001), the connective *so* in (39) is understood to mean that B is asking A what follows from her remark, and the filler *well* in (40) implies that B is asking for the three specific words. The crucial difference here is that if *so* is understood to be activating a particular cognitive effect, whereas *well* is understood to signal that B would like more information (what are the three words?). In other words, *well* has a function

<sup>6</sup> See Blakemore (1988) for an argument of procedural meaning *so*.

as a marker to signal that utterance A is relevant to the hearer. *So* contributes to the hearer's implicit aspects, *well* contributes to the explicit aspect of utterances. Blakemore presents (41) as a unitary account of *well*, and explains that *well* contributes to explicature, especially to higher-level explicature.

- (41) The speaker believes U is relevant (where U is the utterance containing *well*) (Blakemore 2002, 148)

It could be regarded as a signal in the sense that it activates a higher-level explicature of the scheme above. Setting aside the question of this reliability, Blakemore (2002) defines that the filler *well* is linguistic information which contributes to speaker's higher level explicature and constrains procedural meaning. The argumentation of the filler *you know* can be extended to say that *well* and *you know* belong to the same category.

## 5.2 The process to a unitary account of *you know*

Along with Blakemore's presentation of *well*, Noh (1998, 622) has also appealed that other similar expressions such as *you say* or *you mean* should contribute to the speaker's higher-level explicature. This paper will discuss that *you know* also includes one of these categories. As we have seen with the explanation of *well*, however, it can be impossible to consider that *you know* and *well* should have the same meaning. So, to find a unitary account of *you know*, two aspects need to be discussed to separate from the use of *well*; one is the relation with the proposition expressed these fillers are attached to, the other is also relation with higher-level explicature. Along with these discussions, this research intends to present that *you know* has a different meaning from *well* and has an 'assertion' meaning as a unitary meaning.



### 5.2.1 Proposition and *you know*

From all of the appearances of *you know* in Chapter 2, this research has set the three positions of its appearances in sentences given in (42) to be; utterance-initial, medial, and final.

- (42) a. you know P  
 b. P you know  
 c. \_\_\_ you know P [P you know \_\_\_] <sup>(7)</sup>

Along with the positions of *you know*, the relation of position between *you know* and proposition is as in (42). However, that is not the same position as *well*. (43a)-(43d) are all utterance-initial examples.

- (43) a. **Well**, we need to leave soon.  
 b. **You know**, we need to leave soon.  
 c. **Well, you know**, we need to leave soon.  
 d. **?You know, well**, we need to leave soon.

It can be possible for both *well* and *you know* to be used sentence-initially. Looking at (43c), both fillers *well* and *you know* are acceptable to use at the same time in the same sentence. That might be proof that both of them do not have the same meaning. But if we look at (43d), it could be rather difficult to use this order. It is not impossible to use this filler, but the use of (43c) is much more natural than (43d) <sup>(8)</sup>. It is questioned why (43d) is not permitted to be used in this order, being different from (42c). Blakemore (2002) has explained in (41) that *well* signals the speaker believes the

7 Considering all arguments by here, the form 'P *you know* \_' may be existed, but there is no any examples in actual appearances in Chapter 2.

8 Interestingly, even if we look up the BNC data base, we can hardly obtain these fillers in this order.

utterance which contains *well* is relevant, and it could be said that *you know* has the possibility to be relevant. However, there is a reason this order is not permitted in (43d). Look at the following sentence-medial uses shown in (44):

- (44) [Talking about TV programme with friends]
- a. It isn't really like ballet, but it looks sort of real – **you know**, like Candid Camera. (BNC, Billy Bayswater 1990)
  - b. It isn't really like ballet, but it looks sort of real – **well**, like Candid Camera.
  - c. It isn't really like ballet, but it looks sort of real ? **well, you know**, like Candid Camera.
  - d. ??It isn't really like ballet, but it looks sort of real – **you know, well**, like Candid Camera.

Both *well* and *you know* in sentence-medial use are permitted to appear, with (44c) being acceptable but is slightly odd, while (44a)-(44b) are all acceptable. It means that *you know* cannot be used when other factors are inserted, just the same as sentence-initial use of *you know*. Example (45) shows sentence-final use of *well* and *you know*.

- (45) a. ??We need to leave soon, **well**.  
 b. We need to leave soon, **you know**.  
 c. \*We need to leave soon, **well, you know**.

Schourup (2001) has also discussed that sentence-final use of *well* is not permitted as seen in (45a), while the use of *you know* is acceptable in (45b). Because sentence-final use of *well* is not accepted, it is hard to say that the use of *you know* here in (45c) is acceptable.

Different from the use of *well*, *you know* can be closely associated with the proposition of every sentence, regardless of its positions. Hence, we can predict that *you know* has a stronger relationship with proposition of sentence than *well*. Conversely, this relationship can be a reason that the strength of the proposition makes the filler *you know* appear in any position of sentences. According to various appearances in Chapter 3 and Crystal and Davy's (1975) study (see Chapter 2), utterance-medial use of *you know* has been classified as one of the type of appearances, but every *you know* utterance is attached closely to the proposition. That is, *you know* cannot appear only on the initial and final positions of each proposition. The appearance of *you know* can be revised as in (46).

- (46) a.     *you know* P  
       b.     P *you know*

The relation between the proposition and *you know* is as shown in (46)<sup>9</sup>. Having a relation between them, it may be also predicted that *you know* has the intention to extract something from its proposition. There is the possibility that it can be explained with the concept of higher-level explicature.

---

9 Let us look at not only the relation with *well*, but at discourse connectives *but*, which is a revised from (19).

- a. Yes, it is. But, **you know**, the weather is not much better then here at the moment.  
 b. Yes, it is. ?**You know**, but the weather is not much better then here at the moment.

(Modified from Blakemore 2002, 96)

Discourse connective *but* requires the proposition of utterance, too (see Blakemore (1987, 1989, 2000), Fraser (1998) and Rouchota (1990) about an argument of property of *but*), but it does not be necessary to associate closely with the proposition expressed. So, sentence (a) is more natural than (b). The use of (b) is rather unacceptable, because it cannot be accepted that the proposition inserted *but* is combined with *you know*. It is also proof that the relationship between *you know* and the proposition expressed is very strong and associated closely each other. The relation (46) will be acceptable from this perspective as well.

### 5.2.2 Higher level explicature and *you know*

We have seen relation of the filler *you know* to the proposition expressed, and found that *you know* tries to extract from the proposition expressed. So, this relationship *you know* with higher-level explicature will be explored here. Before discussing it, let us look back at an explanation of higher-level explicature in (34) and (35). While (35a) is a (lower-level) explicature, (35b)-(35d) are all higher-level explicatures. (35b) is an embedded explicature (35a) in the speech act schema, and both (35b) and (35c) are embedded speaker's propositional attitudes of utterance. Observing the idea of explicatures, consider (13) again.

(13) [Talking about the tickets they are going to obtain]

Tom: I'm going to get the tickets.

Mary: The tickets?

Tom: **You know**, the circus tickets.

(47) (a) They are the circus tickets.

(b) Tom says that they are the circus tickets.

(c) You should know that it is the circus tickets.

(d) You want to know that it is the circus tickets.

As Tom utters 'you know, the circus tickets', various explicatures are expected to be conveyed to the hearer. It can be considered that (47b)-(47d) are all higher-level explicatures, while (47a) is an explicature. However, the filler *you know*, as well as *well*, is not categorised into (47b), say, which is not embedded into the speech act schema, rather categorised into (47c) and (47d). Consider (48), which are examples of illocutionary adverbs.

(48) a. **Frankly / confidentially**, we need to leave soon.

- b. **Unfortunately**, we need to leave soon.
- (49) a. I tell you **frankly** / **confidentially** that we need to leave soon.
- b. It is **unfortunate** that we need to leave soon.

The illocutionary adverbs in (48) are able to paraphrase as in (49), but in the case of *you know*, it is impossible to do the same <sup>(10)</sup>.

- (50) **You know**, we need to leave soon.
- (51) a. ?I tell you **you know** that we need to leave soon.
- b. \*It is **you know** that we need to leave soon.

Both illocutionary adverbs and *you know* are linguistic information which contributes to the higher-level explicature of speaker's attitude, but as opposed to the case of (48), (50) cannot be paraphrased as in (51). This is proof that *you know* has a different property from illocutionary adverbs. Going back to example (13), Mary probably does not know (or has forgotten) that the tickets are for the circus. Tom knows that Mary does not know it. The higher-level explicature of Tom's utterance here would be shown in (13').

- (13') Tom wants Mary to remember that they are the circus tickets.

---

<sup>10</sup> The filler *well* cannot also paraphrase, either. It means that it also does not have the same nature as illocutionary adverbs.

- (49') *Well*, we need to leave soon. (Schourup 2001)
- (a) ?I tell you *well* that we need to leave soon.
- (b) \*It is *well* that we need to leave soon.

The argument of illocutionary adverbs can be seen in Schourup (2001) and Wilson and Sperber (1993).

(13') is an absolutely higher-level explicature of Tom's utterance. As seen in section 5.2.1, *you know* would be closely associated with the proposition expressed. When the speaker utters the *you know* clause, the higher-level explicature in (13') is derived closely from the proposition expressed. The speaker would convey the propositional attitude of his utterance. The use of *you know* can be considered as a marker that the speaker tries to derive his thoughts or idea from the proposition expressed. Look at another example (14):

- (14) A: I may catch a cold, and need some medicine.  
 B: **You know**, they say an apple a day keeps the doctor away?  
 (14') We do not have to take medicine if we have an apple a day.

What derived from B's utterance in (14) is higher-level explicature, especially conveying speaker's propositional attitude of utterance. B's utterance in (14) is not asking something to hearer A. The speaker tries to bring other assumptions ((14') is one of them) which are related to the proposition expressed to the hearer. Without using *you know*, the hearer might be able to capture the assumptions, but it can make it clear that the hearer sees the speaker's intention. It is likely that *you know* is a kind of marker to do it. Exploring only these examples (13) and (14), it can be predicted that the filler *you know* is a marker which contributes to the higher-level explicature, especially to the speaker's propositional attitude of utterance.

When a speaker utters the *you know* clause, the hearer infers from assumptions derived from the proposition expressed by the speaker. The hearer infers the assumption and thoughts the speaker wants to convey to hearer. This is the concept of metarepresentation. In other words, the speaker attempts to construct a metarepresentation to the hearer who wants

to be relevant. The metarepresentation the hearer will have is what the speaker wants to assert. By using the filler *you know*, the speaker metarepresents assumptions to the hearer with the intention of her assertion.

### 5.2.3 As an assertion and its cause-and-effect

There arises a question. It is questioned why the speaker attempts to assert something to the hearer and then what is the reason or grounds for this assertion are. If a speaker would like to assert something to a hearer, it is quite natural that there are reasons to do so. From the relation with the proposition expressed given in (46), let us continue to look at the examples in (13) and (22) again, which (13) is an utterance-initial and (22) is an final use.

(13) [Talking about the tickets they are going to obtain]

Tom: I'm going to get the tickets.

Mary: The tickets?

Tom: **You know**, the circus tickets.

(13') Tom wants Mary to remember that they are the circus tickets.

(13'') Because Tom is going to get the tickets.

What are the grounds for speaker's assertion of representation to the hearer as in (13')? It is because Tom is going to get the circus tickets. This is given in (13''). The reason would also be the assumption Tom has. It can be considered that the speaker forces the hearer to know the speaker's metarepresented representation, shown in (13'), with using the *you know* clause. Consider example (22), which is an utterance-final use.

(22) A: Do you know him?

B: I know Ian. He looks very handsome now. He is an actor,  
**you know?**

A: Yeah, his eyes are a very nice colour.

(Modified BNC, The meddlers 1970)

(22') The speaker wants to confirm to hearer that he is an actor.

(22'') Because he looks very handsome now.

Example (22) can also be explained by the same approach as (13). Speaker B, by uttering the *you know* clause, makes hearer A represent her metarepresented assumption shown in (22'). The reason is, of course, the fact that Ian looks very handsome now, which is given in (22''). That would be an assumption the speaker has.

Here, a hypothesis of a semantic meaning of *you know* can be proposed. The filler *you know* is explained as language information which encodes procedural constraints and contributes to the speaker's higher-level explicature. Considering these aspects of the property of *you know* explored above, the hypothesis can be proposed with a scheme (52) as the speaker's assertion.

(52) Q. you know P

P: The proposition associated closely with the filler *you know*

R: The metarepresented assumption from P

Q: The ground (or reason) for R (an assumption the speaker has from previous or related utterances)

P is the proposition expressed by the *you know* clause (see 5.2.1, the relation of *you know* with the proposition is flexible, as shown in (46)), R is a speaker's metarepresented assumption derived from P, and then Q, which is the fact or assumption the speaker has, is the ground for R. As the speaker



forces the hearer to infer the metarepresented assumption (R), which is derived from the close proposition expressed (P) of the *you know* utterance, the speaker would have the intention to assert something to the hearer. The ground from R, which could be a reason or cause of the speaker's *you know* utterance, would be the speaker's antecedence assumption in utterances. This research would like to assert here that the filler *you know* could be a marker which asserts metarepresented assumption (R) derived from P, and then justifies a cause-and-effect relation in context. In the next section, the reliability of this hypothesis will be verified with the data presented in Chapter 3.

### 5.3 Demonstration

From all the data presented in Chapter 3, the hypothesis (52) will be verified, which presents a semantic meaning of *you know*. First, let us start from utterance-initial uses (13), (14) and (16). (13) is an example where *you know* is used as the speaker's assertion.

(13) [Talking about the tickets they are going to obtain]

Tom: I'm going to get the tickets.

Mary: The tickets?

Tom: **You know**, the circus tickets.

(Modified from Crystal and Davy 1975, 93)

P: They are the circus tickets.

R: The speaker wants the hearer to remember that they are the circus tickets.

Q: [Because] the speaker is going to get the tickets.

Tom may have an assumption such as 'he is going to get the circus tickets.'

By uttering the *you know* clause, he makes Mary represent R as an assertion. Mary interprets the representation R as Tom's metarepresented assumption, and then she knows that its reason is Q. At that time, Mary interprets not only that they are the circus tickets but also Tom's attitude toward getting the tickets. Consider example (14):

- (14) A: I may catch a cold, and need some medicine.  
 B: **You know**, they say an apple a day keeps the doctor away?  
 (Schiffrin 1987, 275)  
 P: People say an apple a day keeps the doctor away.  
 R: We do not have to take medicine if we have an apple a day.  
 Q: [Because] people need not take any medicine.

Speaker B probably has an assumption Q from A's previous utterance. When the speaker utters the *you know* clause, she tries to represent a metarepresented assumption to the hearer. The hearer understands R and knows Q as the reason for R. Let us look at presenting (or adding) a concrete example (16)<sup>(11)</sup>.

---

11 Example (15) is treated the same as (14), which is utterance-initial use and used as the speaker's introducing new information. We explain in detail here.

- (15) [Concerning a question about relation between the two]  
 I thought that we were friends like. **You know**, like boyfriend and girlfriend.  
 (BNC, Billy Bayswater 1990)  
 P: We are like boyfriend and girlfriend.  
 R: We have been dating together like a couple.  
 Q: [Because] we are friends like.

An assumption the speaker has is probably that 'we are friends, like' (Q). By the speaker's utterance of (15), the speaker attempts to make hearer know a representation R, which is a metarepresentation for P. The hearer sees the representation R, and he realises Q as the reason or grounds for it.

(16) [A, talking with friend B]

A: It was the first time I entered the music room.

B: Which room?

A: **You know**, that lovely room with its medieval instruments.

(BNC, Tomorrow 1991)

P: The room is the lovely one with its medieval instruments.

R: The speaker is really surprised that the room is lovely and there are medieval instruments in it.

Q: [Because] the speaker entered the music room for the first time.

Speaker A has an assumption that she entered the music room for the first time (Q). By A's uttering the *you know* clause, the hearer knows the representation R from the speaker, and then sees Q as the reason for R.

Second, let us look at utterance-medial uses (17)-(20). Example (17) shows introducing new information, and (18) presents (17) presents (or adds) concrete examples.

(17) [Billy tells his daughter]

Billy: I suppose if you work at night. Marie used to do that when I met her – **you know**, sleep all day and then go out at night.

(BNC, Billy Bayswater 1990)

P: Marie slept all day and then went out at night.

R: Billy wants his daughter to know that Marie used to sleep all day and then go out at night when Billy met Marie.

Q: [Because] the speaker supposes if his daughter might work at night.

(18) [Talking TV programme with friends]

It isn't really like ballet, but it looks sort of real – **you know**, like  
Candid Camera. (BNC, Billy Bayswater 1990)

P: The TV programme is like Candid Camera.

R: The speaker asserts that the TV programme looks like  
Candid Camera.

Q: [Because] it looks sort of real.

The speaker, Billy, has an assumption that he supposes if his daughter might work at night (Q). By saying the sentence contained the *you know* clause (*you know*, sleep all day and then go out at night), his daughter knows the representation R and then realises Q will be the reason for R. The speaker (18) has an assumption that the TV programme looks real (Q). By uttering the sentence containing *you know*, the hearer knows the representation R from the speaker and then realises Q will be the reason for R <sup>(12)</sup>. Consider example (19):

(19) A: I suppose that it's summer in New Zealand now.

B: Yes it is. But/ However, **you know**, the weather is not  
much better than here at the moment.

(Modified from Blakemore 2002, 96)

P: The weather is not much better than here at the moment.

R: It is not better to go to New Zealand at this moment.

Q: [Because] it is summer in New Zealand now.

After listening to A's utterance and B answering 'yes, it is', speaker B has an assumption that it is summer in New Zealand now. By uttering the *but*

---

12 Both the speaker and hearer need to have common knowledge about Candid Camera, which is a TV programme, but it can be explained as encyclopaedic knowledge in relevance-theoretic account.

clause, the representation R derived from P is metarepresented by the hearer. The reason for this representation is Q, which is that it is summer in New Zealand now. This example might need to be examined from discourse connective *but* <sup>(13)</sup>.

(20) [Mariana bowls out Trent for some reasons]

You did a mistake again! I'm not useless, **you know**, and you can't do everything on your own.

(BNC, Alistair MacLean's golden girl 1992)

P: The speaker is not useless.

R: Mariana wants to assert by compared with Trent that she is not useless.

Q: [Because] Trent can't do everything on her own.

From the utterances before the *you know* clause, 'You did a mistake again!' speaker A has the assumption that she is not useless. By the speaker's uttering the *you know* clause, she metarepresents the representation R to the hearer, where the representation R is metarepresented from the proposition P. It is quite clear that the filler *you know* plays the role of a marker to metarepresent to the hearer. The reason or grounds for the metarepresented assumption R would be Q. The reason for this representation is Q, which is that Trent can't do everything on her own.

Third, utterance-final uses will be demonstrated; (21) is the speaker's assertion and (22) is confirmation examples.

(21) [Speaker looks at Dorothy, who does not look good feeling]

A: What's going on Dorothy? What has been happening? You

---

13 Refer to footnote (9).

look really pale, **you know**.

(BNC, Part of the furniture 1991)

P: Dorothy looks really pale.

R: Speaker suggests that Dorothy should better to see the doctor.

Q: [Because] speaker A knows Dorothy does not look good.

From the utterances before the *you know* clause, ‘What’s going on Dorothy? What has been happening?’, speaker A has the assumption that Dorothy has not been in good health. By the speaker’s uttering the *you know* clause, she metarepresents the representation R to the hearer, where the representation R is metarepresented from the proposition P. It is quite clear that the filler *you know* plays the role of a marker to metarepresent to the hearer. The reason or grounds for the metarepresented assumption R would be Q.

Consider (22), which is an example of the speaker’s confirmation:

(22) A: Do you know him?

B: I know Ian. He looks very handsome now. He is an actor, **you know?**

A: Yeah, his eyes are a very nice colour.

(Modified BNC, The Meddlers 1970)

P: Ian is an actor.

R: The speaker wants to confirm that Ian is an actor.

Q: [Because] Ian looks very handsome now.

By B’s uttering the *you know* clause, the representation R derived from P is metarepresented by the hearer, along with her assertion that Ian is an actor. The hearer knows R, and as the reason for R he confirms Q.

Finally, look at examples (23) and (24). Example (23) is an example

which has more than two *you know* appearing in a sentence and (24) is one which has no obvious proposition.

(23) [Looking at a friend who is riding a horse for the first time]

A: It is the first time for him to ride a horse, isn't it?

B: Yeah, **you know**, he loops up on the horse, **you know**.

(BNC, Appreciation of literature 1950)

Even if there are two fillers in a sentence, each meaning of *you know* is different from the other. So, it is necessary to observe them separately; the former as (a), the latter as (b).

(a) P: The friend loops up on the horse.

R: Speaker B asserts that the friend attempts to loop up on the horse now.

Q: [Because] it is the first time for the friend to ride a horse.

(b) P: The friend loops up on the horse.

R: Speaker B confirms that the friend is looping up on the horse now.

Q: [Because] it is the first time for the friend to ride a horse.

Both (a) and (b) have the same proposition, but the representation R derived from P should be different. Even if representations R in (a) and (b) are different, their reasons or grounds would be Q, which would be the same assumption of the speaker. This example is proof that the presenting unitary account is right, regardless of the position of *you know*. (24) is a *you know* utterance, which does not have a proposition.

- (24) A: What did you say?  
 B: Oh, **you know**.  
 A: What?  
 B: Just, I wanted to ask what your family was like.
- P: [Speaker B wanted to ask what A's family was like]  
 R: Speaker B hesitate to ask hearer A [what A's family was like].  
 Q: [Because] speaker B does not know that it is better to ask what A's family was like.

The situation this *you know* utterance gives that the speaker has hesitated to say something to the hearer. As you see A's utterance 'What did you say?', B has the assumption that it would be good if she can ask him such a thing because, for example, she has known that he has not had good relations with his family for a long time. The speaker metarepresents R to the hearer. The proposition here would be P, but even if there is no proposition, the speakers can metarepresent R to the hearer. The hearer sees the metarepresented assumption R and then Q would be the reason for R.

## 6. Conclusion

This research has focused on the filler *you know* with relevance-theoretic approach, from its various appearances shown in Chapter 2, and then verified how scheme (52) is organised as a unitary meaning. In conclusion, a semantic meaning of *you know* will be shown in (53).

- (53) A semantic meaning of *you know*:  
 Procedural meaning: Asserting R, which is the metarepresentation of



P

Contributes to higher-level explicature

*You know* is analysed as language information which constrains to a procedural meaning of utterances and contributes to speaker's higher-level explicature by asserting the metarepresentation R. To metarepresent the representation is that, within the approach of relevance theory, it is embedded as higher-level representation in utterances. In this sense, the filler *you know* cannot be categorised into discourse connectives such as *but*, *after all* and *so*, which Blakemore introduced (see 5.1).

There are some issues what need to be discussed further. It can be considered that various inferences are concerned in understanding *you know* utterance than we expect. The many assumptions are recovered in interpreting utterances, that is, it is can be considered that the metarepresentation is consisted of many layers. If we think it so, the *you know* utterance can be considered as echoic utterances as shown in 4.4 <sup>(14)</sup>. The proposal of a semantic meaning *you know* in (53) may be just tiny proposals in this research. The further research will be required.

Secondly, to propose the meaning of *you know* with metarepresentation, it can be regarded that the explanation of *well*, which is proposed by Blakemore (2002), might not be well-organised. It can be predicted that a semantic meaning of *well* presented in (41) needs to be discussed more in detail, which is not just a semantic meaning of speaker's belief that utterance is relevant. If making use of the concept of metarepresentation, that is approaching the same way as *you know*, there is the possibility that *well* is presented as a revised meaning in detail. This has to be left further research. Furthermore, there are many other kinds of language filler such as *I mean*

---

14 Refer to Noh (1995, 1998, 2000) for arguments about echoic utterances in relevance-theoretic account.

and *you see*, which are not discussed with this relevance-theoretic approach yet. It may be possible that the further argumentation of *you know* can be expected by finding their functions or meanings. The study of this field is just now beginning. Relevance theory as cognitive pragmatics has semantics which operates with the cognitive process in utterance interpretation. This concept of semantics can be observed into the use of the tiny language filler *you know*.

This paper is based on my MA dissertation submitted to the University of Leeds in 2007. There are many people who have helped me on my way to this paper. Especially, Dr. Bethan L. Davies (University of Leeds) gave me intellectual inspiration and support as my supervisor. Other staff members and classmates in the Department of Linguistics and Phonetics also gave me some useful comments, especially about the data collection. Once again, I would like to thank all in Leeds.

## References

- Blakemore, D. (1987) *Semantic Constraints on Relevance*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Blakemore, D. (1988) 'So' as a constraint on relevance. *Mental Representations: The Interface between Language and Reality*. (ed.) Kempson, R. M. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 28-51.
- Blakemore, D. (1989) Denial and contrast: a relevance theoretic analysis of *but*. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 12, 28-51.
- Blakemore, D. (1992) *Understanding Utterances: An Introduction to Pragmatics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Blakemore, D. (2000) Indicators and procedures: *nevertheless* and *but*. *Journal of Linguistics* 36, 463-486.
- Blakemore, D. (2002) *Relevance and Linguistic Meaning: The Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse Markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carston, R. (1988) Implicature, explicature, and truth-theoretic semantics.

- Mental Representations: the Interface between language and Reality.* (ed.) Ruth Kempson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 155-181.
- Carston, R. (2000) Explicature and semantics. *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics* 12, 1-44.
- Carston, R. (2002) *Thoughts and Utterances*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Crystal, D. and Davy, D. (1975) *Advanced conversational English*. London: Longman.
- Dixon, J. and Foster, D. (1997) Gender and hedging: from sex differences to situated practice. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 26, 89-107.
- Fraser, B. (1998) Contrastive discourse markers in English. (eds.) Jucker, A. and Ziv, Y. *Discourse Markers: Descriptions and Theories*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 301-326.
- Grice, H. P. (1975) Logic and conversation. *Syntax and Conversation 3: Speech Act*. (eds.) Cole, P. and J. L. Morgan. New York: Academic Press, New York. 41-58.
- Grice, H. P. (1989) Logic and conversation. *Studies in the way of words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 41-57.
- Holmes, J. (1986) Functions of *you know* in women's and men's speech. *Language and Society* 15, 1-22.
- Holmes, J. (1990) Hedges and boosters in women's and men's speech. *Language and communication* 10(3), 185-205.
- Holmes, J. (1995) *Women, men and politeness*. Harlow, Essex, England: Longman.
- Jucker, A. (1993) The discourse marker *well*: a relevance-theoretical account. *Journal of Pragmatics* 19, 435-52.
- Klerk, V. (2005) Procedural meanings of *well* in a corpus of Xhosa English. *Journal of Pragmatics* 37, 1183-1205.
- Lakoff, R. (1975) *Language and woman's place*. New York: Octagon Books.

- Noh, Eun-Ju. (1995) A pragmatic approach to echo questions. *UCL Working Paper in Linguistics* 7, 107-140.
- Noh, Eun-Ju. (1998) Echo questions: metarepresentation and pragmatic enrichment. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 21, 603-628.
- Noh, Eun-Ju. (2000) *Metarepresentation: A Relevance-theory Approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ostman, Jan-Ola. (1981) *You know: a discourse functional approach*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Quirk, R. Greenbaum, S. Leech, G. Svartvik, J. (1972) *A grammar of contemporary English*. Harlow: Longman.
- Rouchota, V. (1990) *But: contradiction and relevance*. *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics* 2, 441-75.
- Schiffrin, D. (1987) *Discourse markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schourup, L. (1999) Discourse markers. *Lingua* 3.4, 227-65.
- Schourup, L. (2001) Rethinking 'well'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 33. 1025-60.
- Wilson, D. (1999) Metarepresentation in linguistic communication. *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics* 11, 127-61. Reprinted in (ed.) Sperber, D. *Metarepresentations: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 411-48.
- Wilson, D. and Sperber, D. (1993) Linguistic form and relevance. *Lingua* 90, 1-25.
- Wilson, D. and Sperber, D. (1995) *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

**Data collection:**

The British National Corpus. <http://corpus.leeds.ac.uk/protected/>  
<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>

**Appendix**

**Appendix A: Criteria for obtaining the filler *you know* data from the British National Corpus**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>The First Step</b>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All possible sentences including <i>you know</i> are extracted from the BNC database.</li> <li>2. Filter out some <i>you know</i> sentences which include within their proposition. Such <i>you know</i> data will be treated as non-filler language information (as in Table A).</li> <li>3. Other <i>you know</i> data, which has a possibility to be treated as a filler, is arranged with some meanings and functions, or positions (sentence-initial, medial, and final, as treated by Crystal and Davy (1975)<sup>(15)</sup>).</li> <li>4. Classify all <i>you know</i> sentences according to their positions as in Table B and predictable meanings as in Table C of the Appendix.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>The Second Step</b> | <p>(2-1)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. With assistance of a native speaker of English, set up possible contexts of each example sentence and sentences in previous studies with the same criteria as those from the BNC.</li> </ol> <p>(2-2)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. From this data, choose some for discussion with regard to the positions of appearances and their meanings. So as to refine these example sentences, refer them to approximately 10 native speakers of English so as to make further judgments. The native speakers are chosen from various ages, genders, and occupations [3 undergraduates (2 female and 1 male in the University of Leeds and the Leeds Metropolitan University), 2 postgraduates (female in the University of Leeds), 2 office workers in Leeds (one is working in a hospital), and 1 housewife]. All of them are British English speakers or English speakers living in the UK.</li> <li>3. They are asked about acceptability of all of the presented <i>you know</i> sentences, and, at the same time, asked how intonation will be changed.</li> </ol> |

**Appendix B: Data collection from the British National Corpus**

**B-1. All you know data from BNC**

|             | Appearances |       |
|-------------|-------------|-------|
| Filler      | 460         | 0.461 |
| Non-filler  | 506         | 0.504 |
| Fixed forms | 35          | 0.035 |
|             | 1001*       | 1     |

15 Refer to the argumentation by Crystal and Davy (1975).

**B-2. Numbers and rate of appeared positions of *you know*.**

|                  | Appearances |       |
|------------------|-------------|-------|
| Sentence-initial | 40          | 0.087 |
| Sentence-medial  | 206         | 0.448 |
| Sentence-final   | 214         | 0.465 |
|                  | 460         | 1     |

**B-3. Numbers and rate of each meaning of filler *you know*.**

| Positions        | Meanings of <i>you know</i>  | Appearances |       |
|------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| Sentence-initial | Introducing new information  | 16          | 0.035 |
|                  | Presenting concrete examples | 11          | 0.024 |
|                  | Speaker's assertion          | 13          | 0.028 |
| Sentence-medial  | Introducing new information  | 39          | 0.085 |
|                  | Presenting concrete examples | 93          | 0.202 |
|                  | Speaker's assertion          | 52          | 0.113 |
|                  | Reconfirmation               | 22          | 0.048 |
| Sentence-final   | Speaker's assertion          | 155         | 0.337 |
|                  | Reconfirmation               | 59          | 0.128 |
|                  |                              | 460         | 1     |

\*All data has been taken from the BNC database operated by the Department of Translation Studies in the University of Leeds. This database cannot obtain more than 1000 data maximally.