"I might, I might go I mean it depends on money things and stuff"[1]. A preliminary analysis of general extenders in British teenagers' discourse

Abstract

The language of teenagers is of particular interest to linguists, in that adolescents and young people introduce important innovations and changes into language use, as compared to the stability typical of adult language. This paper is concerned with the analysis of the spoken language of British teenagers, taken from the Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language (COLT), and looks specifically at a group of English expressions, referred in the literature under different names, 'general extenders' being one of the most common of these in recent years. Data collected from the corpus is contrasted with a comparable sample of the language of adults taken from the Diachronic Corpus of Present-Day Spoken English (DCPSE). Particular attention is paid to three expressions, *and stuff, and everything* and *and things,* since of all general extenders these show the most distinctive features in terms of use and frequency when teenage talk and adult speech are compared. Findings indicate, firstly, that general extenders are, as expected, more typical of speech than of writing; secondly, that they are, contrary to the initial hypothesis, generally more common in adults than in teenage language, although some do occur more frequently in the language of teenagers; thirdly, that their use seems to have increased in recent times; fourthly, that the three general extenders present some features typical of grammaticalization; and finally, that no typical pragmatic function of these is associated with the language of teenagers, although *and stuff* and *and everything* often lose their original set-marking condition in teenage production, that is, their habitual function of classifying an item as a member of a particular class or category, and are used instead as markers of group and social identity.

Key words: general extenders, pragmatic functions, teenagers' language, vague language, grammaticalization

1. Introduction

Interest in teenagers' language has grown over the last few decades, not least because teenagers introduce important innovations, some of which are subsequently incorporated into the standard language of adults (Romaine, 1984; Erman, 1995; Kerswill, 1996; Eckert, 1988, 2000; Rodríguez, 2002; Stenström, Andersen and Hasund, 2002; Tagliamonte, 2005; Dürcheid and Spitzmüller, 2006). The analysis of the language used by adolescents and pre-adolescents, then, has been of critical importance for the study of linguistic change (Sankoff, 2004; Macaulay, 2005; Cheshire, 2007; Jørgensen, 2009; Tagliamonte and D'Arcy, 2009; Tagliamonte and Denis, 2010). Features typical of the language used by teenagers are not only found in British English, but have been observed across different varieties of English and indeed across languages (Cheshire, 1982; Banfi and Sobrero, 1992; Schlobinski et al. 1993; Zimmermann, 1993; Kotsinas, 1994; Apostolou-Panara, 1994; Rampton, 1995; Kerswill and Williams, 1997; Armstrong, 1998; Pujolar, 2001; Rodríguez, 2002; Androutsopoulos, 1998, 2000; Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulos, 2003; Tagliamonte and D'Arcy, 2004; Stenström, 2005a, 2005b; Tagliamonte, 2005; Palacios, 2010). Teens constitute an important social group, one which deserves and perhaps even

demands special attention in all its manifestations, linguistic ones being among the most interesting.

There are several distinctive features of teen language in British English. Although by no means exhaustive, the following list accounts for some of the most important of these: (i) a peculiar way of intensifying language, since teens use intensifiers such as *really* and *absolutely* far more frequently than adults; furthermore, it is very common for teenagers to use *right* and *well* as adjective intensifiers (*they've been right bastards to you*; *I was well drunk*) as well as some taboo words with a reinforcing value, *bloody* and *fucking* in particular (*this is fucking weird*; *I am gonna be bloody thirsty*); (ii) a large number of non-canonical tags: *innit, yeah, okay, eh, right* (*you're in my class innit?*; *so she goes off, okay*?; *there is only one girl that goes there, yeah, with her mum and that's Nadine, yeah*?); (iii) frequent use of slang and taboo words: *fucking, shit, bloody, crap* (*No ragas are fucking crap*; *you guys all know fuck shit and all that lot*); (iv) very common use of *go* and *like* as introducers of direct speech (*she goes* 'you are too immature'; *I didn't want to talk in it, you know, I just went like* 'yeah yeah yeah; *I was like* 'yeah eyah yeah'.); (v) many words used as vocatives, including some insult and swear expressions generally placed after the person to whom they refer: *dirty cat, dickhead, bastard, boy, man, cow* (*You fucking stink you dirty cat*; *give me it you little cow*); (vi) a tendency to play with language and to mimic foreign and other accents typical of varieties of English other than their own, as well as the speech of babies, adults and their peers, even animal noises; (vii) large number of vague words which include placeholders[2] (*Is this the thingy?; he's probably like a whatsit or something*), quantifiers (*I bought fucking loads of them; I dunno they sort of went to have a look*) and the so-called general extenders (*She writes over the table and all*, *People who are really active at sport and stuff, I thought that I won about a hundred pounds or something*, etc).

These latter forms, general extenders, will form the focus of the present study. Frequent use of general extenders by young people has been reported elsewhere in the literature (Dubois, 1992; Stubbe and Holmes, 1995; Cheshire, 2007; Tagliamonte and Denis, 2010) and in a preliminary analysis of British teenagers' language (Palacios, 2010), I detected a very prominent use of certain expressions of this nature, and concluded that it was necessary to explore the extent to which this particular use was different from adult norms in terms of frequency and distribution, as well as to examine the discourse functions that these categories might fulfil in the language of teens. These questions will be addressed here.

2. General extenders: definition and characterization

For the definition and characterization of these forms, I will start by considering the following examples, taken from the corpora used:

(1) I haven't learned my Highway Code and *all that sort of shit* (CO/B142504118).[3]
(2) I might, I might go I mean she depends on money things *and stuff*. (CO/B134101/226)
(3) It was all by the phone *and stuff*. (DC/DIA09/16)
(4) He said he was making a real effort, to be good and to be faithful *and everything*. (CO/B142703/231)
(5) It's when I did it it was really good *and everything*, you know, as long as…(CO/B142706/703)
(6) Do you do sports *and things*? (DC/DIA020/234)

(7) A large number of people sitting in mackintoshes soft seat rugs *and what have you.* (DC/DLF01/411)
(8) I mean like the thought of things that he'd done and *so forth*. (DC/DIA17/186)
(9) like a meal or like, chicken with potatoes *and blah blah blah*. (CO/B136701/31)
(10) What are you doing tonight, you know, do you wanna go out *or something* cos I'm in London, I'm in a hotel. (DC/B142701/103)
(11) Well like changing a plug *or something* like that. (DC/DIA10/273)
(12) She said there wasn't any bones *or anything*. (CO/B136902/48)
(13) Scan it in, flip rotate erm picture slide *or whatever*. (CO/B132503/602)
(14) Sit down and calm yourself, take a Valium *or whatever* it is. (CO/B142607/28)

The forms in italics above all have a number of distinctive features in common:

(i) Form

They generally take the form of a conjunction (*and, or*) plus a noun phrase i.e. *and stuff, or something, and things*. However, this does not apply to examples (7), (8) and (9), where the conjunction is followed by a *wh*-clause (*what have you*), an adverb phrase (*so forth*) and an onomatopoeic sound word (*blah…*), respectively. The conjunctions *and* and *or* are the only ones used and, although being central components of these categories, in some exceptional cases they may not occur; this is true for *and blah blah blah* in which the conjunction *and* may at times be omitted. These forms represent the opposite tendency of the normal pattern of modification "whereby general categories such as NPs or VPs are further specified by the addition of articles, adjectives and the like in one case, and modal or adverbial modification in the other" (Dines, 1980: 10).

General extenders tend to combine with one single previous item, although in some cases they may form part of a series or list of three or more elements, see examples (4) and (7). When this happens, they adopt an enumerative function (Cortés Rodríguez, 2006).

(ii) Clause position

All these forms occupy clause final position and they generally signal turn exchange (Winter and Norrby, 2000: 6). However, in the last few years, some of these, such as *and stuff,* have become more flexible in their position (Overstreet, 1999:13; Cheshire, 2007: 156; Tagliamonte and Denis, 2010: 342). The fact that they occupy clause final position means that most of the time they are the end of an information and tone unit. The only elements that may come after them are discourse markers and backchannels typical of speech, such as *you know, you see, okay, yeah, well, sort of, I mean* or a tag question; see example (5). These discourse markers may also occur before them, as in (2), (8) and (10); in the case of the first two, *I mean* initiates the speaker's turn.

(iii) Polarity

They tend to occur in declarative positive clauses, although they can also be found in declarative negative, interrogative and imperative sentences. This is the case with (1) which is negative, (6) and (10), which are interrogative, and (13) and (14), imperative.

(iv) General extenders versus discourse markers

General extenders should be considered as different from general discourse markers (Schiffrin, 1988; Fraser, 1999; Aijmer, 1985, 2002) for the following reasons: a) they constitute a fairly homogeneous category of words formed by a conjunction followed by

a noun phrase; the category of discourse markers is formed by a wide variety of forms, such as conjunctions, adverbs, prepositional phrases and even some idiomatic expressions (Fraser, 1999: 943); b) they generally occupy clause final position, showing little flexibility in comparison with general discourse markers; c) they can make reference to different preceding items, from a noun phrase to a verb phrase or even a whole clause, although they are always part of the sentence structure; d) they usually mark the end of the information and tone unit; and e) they perform a wider variety of pragmatic functions than the typical discourse markers, since not only are they used to classify a given category within a larger group but they also serve to express interpersonal relations (see section 5.2.3 below).

However, in contrast to the previous features, they do also have some characteristics in common with discourse markers: a) they have a core meaning which is not conceptual and which varies according to the context; b) they mark a relationship between the element they introduce and the previous segment; c) they may be found in writing, although less frequently than in speech; and d) they are also used to convey interpersonal relationships among participants in a conversation and to express the speakers' attitude towards the message.

(v) Context and variation

General extenders are more frequent in informal contexts and in informal interactions among speakers who know one another quite well (Dines, 1980; Biber *et al*., 1999: 115-116; Overstreet and Yule, 1997: 252). They may also occur in writing and in formal discourse although their occurrence is much more limited. Several studies have also reported that general extenders are typical of youth language (Dubois, 1992: 183; Stubbe and Holmes, 1995: 77; Winter and Norrby, 2000; Cheshire, 2007; Tagliamonte and Denis, 2010). Dines (1980: 18) also claims that these items are more common among working-class women. Cheshire (2007: 155) has also considered the sociolinguistic variable here and her findings show that in certain parts of England, such as Reading and Milton Keynes, *and stuff* and *and things* function as sociolinguistic indicators of middle class speakers while *and that* is favored by working class teenagers. The gender variable has also been considered by some analyses (Stenström et al, 2002; Cheshire, 2007) although no variation has been found.

The presence of general extenders has also been the subject of study in other genres, such as academic discourse. Thus, Simpson (2004: 48-50) mentions that *and so on* and *and so forth* are quite popular in the language of professors whereas *or something* (*like that*), *and stuff* (*like that*) and *things* (*like that*) are especially favored by students. Moreover, the first four expressions are more likely to occur in single-speaker academic discourse than in interactive academic contexts. For this linguist, these expressions are mainly vagueness markers (2004: 53).

(vi) Reference

These forms generally refer to the preceding element which tends to be a noun phrase most of the time, performing a syntactic function other than subject (6), (11). At times general extenders may refer to the whole previous clause (10) and (13), to the preceding verb (11) or even to a prepositional phrase (3). There are also cases in which their reference is not wholly clear, as in (4), where it is not known whether the speaker has the previous adjective *faithful* in mind or the whole clause. Examples like this are not at all rare. As Aijmer (1985) and Overstreet (1999) point out, intonation and prosody may clarify this question in real speech. Furthermore, Cheshire (2007) draws our attention to

the fact that it is quite common for some of these general extenders, such as *and things* and *and stuff*, not to refer to a preceding noun.

(vii) Modification
All these categories may be complemented or modified by some other forms, such as *like this/that*, (*of) that sort/kind*, *this/that nonsense*, *this/that business*, *this bit*, *the rest of it*, etc., see examples (1) and (11).

(viii) Functions in discourse
They should not only be regarded as simple tokens of vague, sloppy language or hedges since they can also have other functions in discourse. Although they may denote on many occasions a vague reference, they may be used to classify or set items belonging to a particular category, "vague category identifier" (Channell, 1994:131), "set marker" (Aijmer, 1985), "set marking tag" (Dines, 1980; Ediger, 1995). Also, the fact that these expressions can serve to express vague language should not be regarded as something negative. Thus, Anderson and Trudgill (1990: 29) draw attention to the fact that the existence of these words and phrases with a wide application and reference is of key importance in English and indeed in other languages since they are part of everyday communication. Channell (1994:3) maintains that vagueness in language cannot be regarded as either inherently positive or negative if it is used appropriately. Furthermore, often they also convey intersubjectivity, that is, a special relationship between participants in a spoken interaction or a particular attitude of the speaker towards the message (Aijmer, 1985; Overstreet and Yule, 1997; Overstreet, 1999).

(ix) General extenders across languages
There is general agreement that general extenders are not exclusive to English but are present in many languages, amongst these French (Dubois, 1992), German (Overstreet, 2005), Japanese (Wierzbicka, 1991; Honda, 1996), Swedish (Winter and Norrby, 2000) and Spanish (Cortés Rodríguez, 2006). However, their discourse functions, formal representation and distribution may vary considerably from one language to another. Thus, for example, Overstreet (2005: 1858, 1861) shows that some general extenders, such as *or what* and *and all*, are used as intensifiers much more frequently in American English than comparable forms are in German. Furthermore, she also notes a higher variability in form and frequency of use in American English compared to German.

(x) General extenders in the history of English
Although they are more frequent in present-day English than in any other period of the history of the English language, they have also been reported at earlier stages, "the extender tag has been a feature of English throughout its history" (Carroll, 2008: 17). In his grammar of late Modern English, Poutsma refers to *and (all) that* as the expression for something vague "which the speaker is not prepared to specify in the hurry of the discourse" (1916: 914), and includes examples taken from Dickens, Thackeray and Hardy. The OED also shows that most of these general extenders started to be used in the 16th and 17th centuries, although Carroll (2006) provides evidence of the existence of some of these categories, such as *and/or more*, *and/or places*, *and/or such*, *and/or things*, *and so forth*, *and things*, *and stuff*, and *necessaries*, in late Middle English. Disjunctive forms with *or* (*or something*, *or whatever*) seem to have been introduced later, around the 19th century.

(xi) Terminology

The terminology used in the literature to define these items varies considerably from set marking tags (Dines, 1980; Ward and Birner, 1993; Stubbe and Holmes, 1995; Winter and Norrby, 2000), discourse particle extensions (Dubois, 1992), utterance final tags (Aijmer, 1985), terminal tags (Macaulay, 1985), generalized list completers (Jefferson, 1990), post-noun hedges (Meyerhoff, 1992), generalisers (Simpson, 2004) to vague category identifiers (Channell, 1994), final coordination tags (Biber *et al.*, 1999) and general extenders (Overstreet, 1999, 2005; Cheshire, 2007; Carroll, 2007, 2008), Tagliamonte and Denis, 2010). Such labels sometimes refer to the function and sometimes to special characteristics of these items. In this study I have used Overstreet's 'general extenders', which I find the most neutral and the most descriptively satisfying, as well as being the preference of writers such as Cheshire, Carroll, and Tagliamonte and Denis.

From the point of view of classification, the general extenders have been divided into two main groups: adjunctive (those connected with the conjunction *and*) and disjunctive (when linked with *or*). A further useful distinction is that made by Overstreet (1999:12) between general extenders (e.g. *and stuff, and things*) and specific extenders (e.g. *and all that sort of crap, and that sort of stuff, or anything of that kind*).

3. Review of the literature

In spite of being a fairly restricted area of the English language, general extenders have received quite a lot of attention recently, the first significant studies dating from the 1980s. Dines (1980) focuses on the occurrences of what she calls 'set marking tags', in the data provided by two groups of interviews with middle and working-class women. Her study reveals that these tags are more common in the speech of working-class than middle-class women. Furthermore, she rejects the idea that these tags play no function in discourse and emphasises that nothing indicates that these categories express "vague and inexplicit speech". Aijmer (1985) argues that, in addition to the basic set-marking function, these items show that "utterance final or terminating tags" may express other conversational values. She makes a clear-cut distinction between *and*-tags and *or*-tags. *And*-tags, apart from a set-marking function of addition, may perform a discourse structuring function (summarizing), a conversation-specific function (fumble), as well as a social (creating rapport), interactive (establishing common ground) and informational functions (foregrounding). In contrast, *or*-tags may express hedging, softening and approximation, as well as having an iterative set-marking value.

In the 1990's, Channell (1994), in her global study of vague language, dedicates a full chapter (chapter 6) to the consideration of general extenders. She administered two paper and pencil tests to two groups of first year university and sixth form British students. The tests consisted of 30 sentences containing 31 examples of extenders following the structure *bread or something*, that is, an exemplar of a category (*bread*) plus a general extender (*or something*). The respondents were asked to list possible items the speakers could have in mind when they wrote these expressions. No major discrepancies among the respondents were recorded except for some different interpretations of some of the examples given. These inconsistencies were caused by the effect of a differing kind of word knowledge, and also by the exemplar triggering in certain subjects responses other than what was predictable, what Channell (1994: 130) describes as 'recontextualization'. The results obtained in this study show: firstly, these general extenders are not only simple fillers in conversation but vague category identifiers as well; secondly, they refer to categories, either conjunctively or disjunctively, which may have a concrete or an abstract nature; thirdly, these serve to access the categories they represent which are also conditioned by the exemplar

provided, the linguistic context, the purpose of the text and the speakers' pragmatic knowledge.

Overstreet and Yule (1997), elaborating on and expanding the discourse functions of these expressions in the direction already initiated by Aijmer (1985), mark a real turning-point. As a means of illustration, they concentrate on the expression *and stuff*. For this purpose, they first collected their own data, based on 10 hours of telephone conversations of American English speakers, 11 female and 7 male. A second collection of 10 more hours of conversation in more formal contexts was then carried out. They conclude that general extenders appear in both formal and informal interactions although they tend to be more frequent among those familiar with each other. Furthermore, they provide clear evidence that these expressions are not only indicators of vague language but are very often makers of intersubjectivity. Thus, *and stuff*, functions as a marker of solidarity and as an indicator that the speaker treats their interlocutors as their equals.

All these points were thoroughly discussed in Overstreet's 1999 book, in which she first redefines these items, in order to go on and deal closely with their ideational and interpersonal functions. She concludes that the interpretation of general extenders as set marking categories is necessarily subjective as it is difficult to believe that the speaker's and the listener's perceptions of the exemplar provided and the categories referred to by them could match perfectly. Apart from this, Overstreet provides empirical data that reveals that general extenders perform a wide variety of discourse functions: underscoring similarity, creating a sense of rapport, highlighting a preceding part of the utterance, expressing politeness and representing the expectations of the participants in the interactions associated with the Gricean maxims of Quality and Quantity. Six years later, Overstreet (2005) adopts a contrastive perspective by comparing the syntactic and pragmatic features of these expressions in German and English. Her findings are quite similar in terms of frequency for the two languages: disjunctive extenders outnumbered adjunctive forms; furthermore, they perform similar discourse functions in both cases although differing in their grammatical distribution and in some of their syntactic features; whereas in English general extenders tend to occur in final clause position, in German they appear in clause-internal positions, either preceding past participle forms or placed before verbs in subordinate clauses. Furthermore, in English some cases of extenders are found where the conjunctions *and* or *or* are not present as part of the general extender structure, whereas no example of this kind is recorded in German. Overstreet also describes as exclusive to German the existence of an extender consisting only of a repeated conjunction (*und und und*). Stenström *et al*. (2002) also refer to vague words and expressions in the consideration of teenagers' language. General extenders are classified as part of the expression of this nature. Although their results are not conclusive, they make a contrastive analysis in the use of these expressions between teenagers' and adults' discourse on the basis of the COLT corpus, and conclude that adult speakers in the corpus use more vague language (approximators, vague quantifiers, adverbs of frequency, placeholders, etc) and, consequently, a higher proportion of general extenders than teenagers, although convincing arguments as to why this might be the case are not given.

More recently, Ruzaite (2007) is concerned with general extenders as the expression of vague language in both British and American English, looking at the extent to which there are differences between these two varieties in this respect. General extenders are considered in this study alongside other linguistic categories used to represent vague language: approximators (*about*),[4] quantifiers (*little*) and placeholders (*thingy*, *whatsisname*, *thingummy*). Using a corpus-based methodology, analysing data extracted

from part of the BNC (British National Corpus) and 152 transcripts of MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English), she concludes that in British English there exists a higher degree of tentativeness than in American academic discourse. Furthermore, in British English quantifiers are used to "mitigate negatively loaded lexemes". As regards general extenders in particular, she shows how they are used to fill lexical gaps, although she also acknowledges that if one wants to obtain a complete understanding of their role in discourse, the importance of their pragmatic functions must also be addressed.

Cheshire (2007) analyses a group of general extenders in the speech of adolescents from three different English towns. Her results show that the extender *and that* is favored by the working class speakers whereas *and stuff* and *and things* are preferred by middle class subjects. She also concludes that most of these general extenders are going through different gramamticalization processes, such as phonetic reduction, decategorization, semantic change and pragmatic shift. *And that* and *and everything* are the most highly grammaticalized, followed by *or something* and *and stuff*. *And things* was the least grammaticalized form. Cheshire also contends that, given the fact that these general extenders can have a wide variety of pragmatic functions, it is necessary to consider each example in the given context rather than making generalizations that, on many occasions, do not conform to reality.

Carroll (2008) has recently studied general extender historically describing their semantic and syntactic behavioral characteristics as phraseologisms and collostructs.[5] Finally, Tagliamonte and Denis (2010) conduct research along similar lines to Cheshire, concentrating on the nature of general extenders in the English spoken by adolescents in Toronto. They show that the patterns of general extenders in this variety remain stable over time and the state of gramaticalization of these forms is not as advanced as in the case of England. They also claim that *and stuff* is becoming the dominant form for generalization and is clearly prevailing over the rest of the units of the adjunctive system.

Broadly speaking, reference grammars, such as Quirk et al. (1985), Huddleston, Pullum *et al*. (2002), Carter and McCarthy (2006) deal only very briefly with these constructions, and Biber *et al*. (1999) is the only one to include even a few notes about them. They maintain that these 'final coordination tags', as they are here referred to, are more common in conversation and in fictional dialogues, that the unit following these structures is an unstressed noun or a pronoun denoting a general meaning and that the reordering of the elements forming these categories is not possible. Some statistics are also provided on their frequency of use. *Or something* is the most common of all these final coordination tags, occurring 400 times per million words, followed by *and everything*, 150 per million words; *and things* and *and stuff* occur 100 and 50 instances per million words, respectively. It is also pointed out that rather than expressing complete explicitness, these final coordination tags are in keeping with the communicative purpose of conversation, since they denote the participants' personal involvement in the interactions.

From the above review, it can be seen that general extenders have been widely discussed from different perspectives (lexical, syntactic, psychological, pragmatic, contrastive, variational, sociolinguistic, etc.), using a wide range of methods of analysis (corpora, elicitation tests, questionnaires, interviews, invented examples) and with different objectives in mind. However, it is still necessary to carry out large corpus-based analyses to investigate their behavior and function in particular varieties of English, the language used by British teenagers being a good case in point. Moreover, it is also relevant to draw a contrast in the use of these extenders between teenagers and

adults since out of that comparison further information will be obtained about the nature of these categories, helping also to characterize more fully the language of these two social groups.

4. Purpose and Method

This paper forms part of a larger project on British teenagers' spoken language with particular reference to several lexical, syntactic and pragmatic areas typical of this variety: the expression of negative polarity, the strategies used by these subjects to intensify language, the distribution and function of certain tags, the different forms teenagers play with language, the use of vocatives, quotatives and slang. In a second stage, I will also conduct a contrastive study of similar issues with Spanish.

In the present paper, I will analyse the use of the most common general extenders in the language of teenagers by considering their syntactic, semantic and discourse features. As regards syntax, I will pay attention to their position in the sentence, the units they refer to, the type of clauses where they occur, the role of clause polarity, and the nature of the items that tend to co-occur with them. As regards semantics and discourse, I will study whether these categories only refer to something indefinite, that is, vague language or whether they can convey other additional meanings which can be considered to be characteristic of teenagers. Attention will also be paid to their frequency, identifying and examining in closer detail those which obtain the highest number of mentions in the corpora used. The ultimate goal of this study will be to contrast the use of these forms in the language of adulthood with that of teenagers, highlighting the main differences and providing an explanation for them. In line with previous studies, such as Cheshire (2007), and Tagliamonte and Denis (2010), I will also examine whether some of these general extenders are going through similar processes of gramamticalization.

The findings will be compared with those in previous studies, primarily Aijmer (1985), Channell (1994), Biber *et al*. (1999), Stenström *et al*. (2002), Overstreet and Yule (1997), Overstreet (1999, 2005), Cheshire (2007), and Tagliamonte and Denis (2010).

Two main corpora will be used as the basis of analysis: COLT and DCPSE. The COLT corpus, which is part of the BNC, will represent the language of teenagers. Compiled in 1993, it contains 431,528 words and consists of 377 spontaneous conversations produced by 31 boys and girls aged 13 to 17 in the London area, including the boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Barnet, Camden and Hachney, and the county of Hertfordshire. All the conversations are equivalent to roughly 50 hours of recorded speech. The recruits recorded themselves with the aid of a small Sony Walkman Professional. The recordings contained their interactions with friends, school peers, teachers and members of the family.

With the purpose of comparing the findings here with general English and, more particularly, with adult mainstream British English, data extracted from COLT will be compared to comparable samples taken from DCPSE. To ensure the best comparison, texts classified as informal face-to-face conversations (403,844 words) and assorted spontaneous speech (21,675 words) were selected from DCPSE, a total of 425,519 words. The DCPSE is sampled from both the London Lund corpus and ICE-GB (International Corpus of English- GB component). In the case of the data selected for the present study, 50 percent is from ICE-GB, which was recorded in the early 1990s, that is, at a similar time as COLT. The remainder was recorded between 1958 and 1977. These timings will have a bearing on the analysis. I will first present findings for the whole time period, 1958 to 1993, and then address these findings in detail, looking at

the two time periods separately. This will allow me to draw more accurate comparisons between the data on teenagers and adults, and will allow a more complete picture of the evolution of these extenders over time to be drawn. It has to be borne in mind that the first period covers almost two decades, compared to only three years for the second, and that there is an obvious gap, 1978 to 1989, between the periods, both shortcomings inevitable with this corpus.

There is an additional methodological issue that should be borne in mind. Firstly, although the COLT corpus was compiled to represent language produced by British adolescents, all the speakers represented in it come from the London area, with their own geographical, social and ethnic backgrounds. As a result, this corpus cannot be regarded as representing general adolescence in British English but London teenager speech exclusively. However, it is true that some of the findings obtained and the tendencies identified, particularly in the areas of syntax and discourse, may be applied to general teenage English as several sociolinguists (Kerswill and Williams, 1999; Foulkes and Docherty, 1999) have already pointed out, noting that some London features seem to be spreading throughout the whole country.

For the analysis of the data, in the case of the COLT corpus I first manually examined about half the total conversations to acquaint myself with the general features of the material, the conventions used for the transcription, the topics discussed in the conversations and also to identify different speakers. Once familiar with the corpus, I made use of the application Concapp4 for search queries, which provided raw data that then had to be carefully filtered by hand. As regards the DCPSE, the analysis was much simpler as the corpus itself provides a tool that permits different types of search. However, it was quite often necessary to go to the original sample to study the full context, read the whole conversation extract, and contrast the language behavior of the different speakers. In both cases, COLT and DCPSE, and in spite of the aid of the computer programmes, a fairly high number of examples collected in the first selection had to be discarded as these expressions did not have, in their contexts, the value of general extenders. Consider the following:

(15) apparently and they'd apologised you know *and everything* was cool and I thought, I was quite adamant (CO/B142703/114)

(16) You've got to recognise the things that are regular *and things* that are completely irregular and suppletive (DC/D1B82/71)

(17) You went to the marathon *and that*'s why we couldn't do it, (CO/B13506/119)

In (15) *and* is introducing a coordinating clause in which *everything* functions as the subject of the main verb (*was*). We clearly see that this has nothing to do with what is typical of a general extender structure and value. Something similar applies to (16), there is a paratactic construction with two sentences coordinated with *and* where the speaker draws a contrast between two types of things. In this case, the second *things* is the subject of the second clause. Finally, in (17) *and* introduces a coordinated clause with a causative value in which *that* functions as the subject of the *why* clause, which is in turn modified by another clause (*we couldn't do it*). As can be clearly seen, these three cases are completely different from the structure generally adopted by standard general extenders.

Finally, apart from the use of the previous two corpora, I also consulted the ICE-GB and the BNC to investigate the behavior of general extenders in the language of speech and writing, since COLT and DCPSE, containing only spoken data, were not suitable

for this kind of analysis. The ICE was compiled in 1990 with the aim of providing information for the analysis of English across different regional and national varieties. The written corpus contains 400,000 words while the spoken sample is composed of 600,000 words.

The BNC is much larger than the previous one. It is formed by a 100 million word collection of written and spoken language which was compiled to represent British English from the later part of the twentieth century. The written part contains 90 million words extracted from different written sources, such as academic books, popular fiction, letters, and school and university essays. The spoken component of the corpus is integrated by 10 million words which correspond to orthographic transcriptions of informal conversations, interviews, radio shows, and business and government meetings.[6]

5. Results Analysis and Discussion

5.1. Overall Distribution according to the Medium of Expression

In order to support the hypothesis that general extenders are typical of speech, which up to now has been only taken for granted in the literature (Biber et al. 1999, Overstreet, 1999; Stenström et al, 2002; Cheshire, 2007) without having been tested with hard data, and in order to justify the exclusive selection of oral data in this study, an experiment was conducted with the ICE-GB corpus contrasting the written subcorpus (400,000 words) with the spoken sample (600,000 words). The findings are most illustrative. The extender *and stuff*, was found only once in the written component of this corpus versus 34 times in the spoken component. Something similar applies to *and that*, *and everything*, *and things* and *and all*, which occurred in speech on 48, 25, 59 and 63 occasions respectively versus only 4, 2, 2 and 0 in writing. The same tendency is identified for the rest of these items. As can be gathered from these figures, the presence of these categories in speech is far greater than in writing, a general frequency of 10.15 versus 1.525 per 10,000 words. The form *and so on* is the only one obtaining high figures in writing since this tag is more closely associated with more formal language and, more particularly, with fiction (Overstreet and Yule, 1997: 252; Biber et al. 1999; Simpsom, 2004).

To verify the previous findings, a similar analysis was conducted in the BNC containing a hundred million words, ninety million words of written language and ten million of speech. This would serve to confirm my previous findings. Normalized frequencies were calculated to interpret the data more accurately, since the size of the written and spoken sections differs so greatly. Once again, frequencies obtained for all these general extenders were much higher in speech than in writing. For example, the frequency of *and stuff* in writing is 0.019 whereas in speech 0.43. A similar tendency was observed for all the other extenders with the exception of *or so*. The general frequency value in speech for 10,000 words was 9.22 vs. 0.912 in writing which clearly confirms my previous results. This means that the proportion of general extenders in speech is almost a hundred times more than in written language. It is also interesting to point out that when comparing the figures obtained for each individual general extender in the two corpora, ICE-GB and BNC, and in spite of the important differences in size and structure of these two corpora, the frequency values for each of the general extenders considered are even similar in some cases, being this particularly true for disjunctive extenders as, for example, *or something*, *or so*, *or anything* and *or whatever*.

As mentioned above, it can be concluded then that general extenders are more typical of speech since they are relevant features of the oral interaction. In writing, they

are mainly found in fictional texts, that is, in situations where the writer tries to reproduce a dialogue or a conversation, or in informal writing, such as email correspondence as in the following.

(18) Apologies if any of you have tried to send mail *and stuff* to the list or listserv over the part hour or so. (BN/88JIC)

INSERT TABLE 1

5.2. Overall Distribution according to the Adults' or the Teenagers' Language

To study this feature, an initial distinction was made between primary and secondary general extenders (Overstreet, 1999). The first group includes the items of the general extender category of major relevance in use while the second set lists those tags of minor relevance as regards their frequency and role in the language.

The differences between the two groups, adults and teenagers, are statistically highly significant, at 18.14 versus 12.29 ($x^2 = 32.16$, df =1, $p<.0001$). Adult speakers, here represented by the oral sample taken from the DCPSE, clearly resort to a higher number of general extenders than teenagers according to the information obtained from COLT; however, the latter also use some of these forms, such as *and everything*, *and that*, *and stuff*, more often than adults. This is particularly so in the case of *and that* and *and stuff*, since the frequency of use of these two forms in the language of adolescents is over two and almost three times higher, respectively, than in the case of adults (1.6 and 1.1 versus 0.75 and 0.44 respectively). *Or something* is the most common of all and, curiously, this applies to both groups of speakers. Furthermore, adults tend to use a wider and more varied set of general extenders, including items such as *and things*, *and so on*, *or so*, *or whatever*. In addition to this, there are some forms that only occur in the adults' speech; this is the case with *and so forth* and *so on and so forth*. In contrast, *and crap* and *or anybody* only occur in the speech of teenagers, although this is of scant significance since only one example is recorded for each item. Something similar applies to *and blah blah blah*, which occurs only once in the adult sample while eight tokens are recorded in the language of teenagers. Both in the adults' and the teenager's spoken language, adjunctive general extenders, that is, those connected with *and*, are more common than the disjunctive, those in which *or* is the linking element: the ratios being 388 versus 373 and 307 versus 261, respectively. However, it is important to point out that within the group of disjunctives, special mention should be made of *or something* as it represents almost one third (30.5 percent) of extenders in the adult language and over one third of the total (34.5 percent) in the adolescents' language.

In general terms, these results are in keeping with previous research (Overstreet, 1999; Cheshire, 2007; Tagliamonte and Denis, 2010) since both adults and teenagers exhibit a wide variation of forms of this kind. However, individual figures do not entirely coincide with those of previous studies. Here, *and stuff* obtains a lower frequency than in Winter and Norrby (2000), Cheshire (2007), and Tagliamonte and Denis (2010), for example, where it is seen to be one of the most frequent extenders.

INSERT TABLE 2

These results do not fully confirm the original prediction since a higher proportion of general extenders in the language of teenagers than in that of adults was expected. This assumption was based on the fact that general extenders tend to be more common in colloquial and informal language than in formal varieties and between young speakers who share common ground and knowledge, and a high degree of familiarity.

This hypothesis was also supported by similar studies with subjects from different geographical backgrounds (Dubois, 1992; Stubbe and Holmes, 1995; Winter and Norrby, 2000; Cheshire, 2007, Tagliamonte and Denis, 2010). However, this study confirms, as Table 2 above reveals, that certain general extenders, such as *and stuff, and that* and *and everything* are much more common in the adolescents' language that in the adult speech. They, in fact, represent over 35 percent of the total of general extenders in the teenagers' sample. It seems to be the case that adolescents concentrate their use of extenders, especially in the case of adjunctives, on a small number of forms, with the opposite being true with the adults, who seem to use a wider repertoire.

To examine the evolution of general extenders over time and to compare more accurately the data from teenage and adults, a second analysis of the material from the DCPSE was conducted. Two different groups were distinguished, the first including the data from the LLC, covering the period from 1958 to 1977, and the second with data from the ICE-GB, covering 1990 to 1993, see Table 3 below. Clearly, data from the latter period is more comparable with COLT since the dates of compilation were practically the same, the early 1990s.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

The highest number of general extenders are found in the first period of the DCPSE, with 428 tokens, as opposed to 339 items for the second group; relative frequencies per 10,000 words for these are 19.53 and 15.48, respectively. Whereas the size of the samples of both components of the corpus is approximately the same, data from the first group covers almost two decades, compared to the three year period of the second, and this might have a bearing on findings. Use of individual extenders tends to decrease from the first to the second period, although this does not apply to *and stuff, or something* and *or whatever*, with frequency values that increase considerably in the second period. Furthermore, by comparing figures for the 1990-1993 DCPSE sample with those of COLT, it is observed that the proportion of general extenders for adults is higher than for teenagers (15.48 versus 12.29), as was the case when considering the two samples of the DCPSE together; the differences, however, are not so significant as when the two samples of the DCPSE were contrasted with the teenagers' data. This serves to confirm the previous finding: adults use more general extenders than teenagers, whereas teenagers tend to use a small number of them (*and stuff, and everything, and that*) much more frequently than adults.

For reasons of space, I will focus here on only three of the adjunctive extenders: *and stuff, and everything* and *things*; these show the highest differences in frequency and use between the two groups of subjects considered, teenagers and adults, apart from being those which are most extensively studied in the literature.

In the following I will concentrate mainly on three main areas: evolution of these forms over time on the basis of the data provided by the DCPSE, grammatical features, and discourse-pragmatic functions.

5.3. *And stuff/and everything/and things*

5.3.1. Evolution in use of these forms

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (online edition), *and things* is the first of these three general extenders introduced in the English language, the first citation dating from 1601. This contrasts with *and stuff,* which was first introduced almost one hundred

years later, in 1697. No attestation is recorded in the dictionary of *and everything* as an independent and combined entry.

The data from the DCPSE (see Table 4 below) shows that these three general extenders have increased their use in recent times, this being particularly remarkable in the case of *and stuff*; out of the 19 examples registered, 79 percent (15 cases) are from 1990-1993; no occurrences of this item are noted for the 1960s. In the case of *and things* and *and everything* similar tendencies are observed; very few cases are found in the 1960s (9 and 4 respectively, that is, 8.8 percent and 9.7 percent), with 94 and 37 tokens respectively for the period 1970 to 1993 (92.2 percent for *and things* and 90.3 percent for *and everything*). Whereas the evolution of these two extenders over the period 1958 to 1993 is clearly quite similar, additional data would be necessary to confirm the tendency: the corpus does not provide any information from 1978 to 1989, the evolution in use of these words from the 1990s to the present is not known, and the number of examples is not large enough to come to definitive conclusions. The current lack of British English diachronic corpora covering this period needs to be addressed before more conclusive studies can be made.[7]

INSERT TABLE 4

5.3.2. Grammatical features

These three tags, as explained above, share a number of grammatical features: sentence final position signalling turn exchange, formal structure consisting of a conjunction (*and*) plus a noun phrase, reference to a preceding element, occurrence mainly in declarative positive clauses, etc. In addition to this, they may be found in their short or complex forms, that is, modified by other constructions, such as *like this* or *like that*, *of the kind* or even *else* as *in everything else*.

(19) None of the other people are probably gonna have *stuff like this* on their tape. (CO/B134202/27)
(20) Uhm it's a system that has been used by biologists and ecologists and *everything like that*. (DC/DIB28/0220)
(21) But the names are changed *and things like that* so they won't know. (DC/DIB54/0046)

No differences are attested between the two corpora as regards these general features. More particularly, Table 5 below shows that *and stuff* is much more common in teenagers' speech than in the spoken language of adults, three times as more, to be more accurate. It occurs mainly in declarative positive clauses but it can also be present in interrogative (22) and negative sentences (23).

(22) Is there a new pictures *and stuff*? (CO/B133905/263)
(23) It's not the end of the world *and stuff*. (DC/DIB41/18)

It is also curious to see that in both corpora, but particularly in COLT, it mainly occurs in its simple form, that is, without being modified by forms, such as *like this/like that*. This corresponds to 86 percent of the cases. In DCPSE no major differences are attested in this respect between the two samples and periods considered, 1958-1977 versus 1990-1993, since the proportion of reduced forms is practically the same in the two periods. This phonological reduction from the complex and regular form to the simple could be easily regarded as a typical mechanism of grammaticalization; in other

words, this phenomenon could indicate that this extender is being grammaticalized to a lower or higher extent (Hopper and Traugott, 1993:3; Fischer and Rosenbach, 2000: 2).

INSERT TABLE 5

Moreover, it tends to refer anaphorically to preceding nouns although these are not necessarily plural mass nouns. They can be singular count (24) and singular mass (25):

(24) Er Mr, er ya=, I've got a letter *and stuff*. (CO/139701/47)
(25) And also gen generally things that kind of like combined combined creativs creativity with more mundane things like administration *and stuff* like that. (DC/DIA07/180)

Apart from nouns, which would be the expected category to find, *and stuff* can also refer to any part of the preceding utterance, a prepositional phrase (26) or even a whole clause (27). However, at times the obvious anaphor is not totally clear from the context (28). In this case it is not really known whether the speaker is referring to the action of translation or to any other activity:

(26) People who are really active at sport *and stuff*, have got a high metabolic rate .(CO/B141901/233)
(27) I started the course <,> thinking that uhm I'd sort of do the full seven years *and stuff*. (DC/DIA07/14)
(28) Have you actually liked translated it *and stuff*? (CO/142302/8)

The proportion of instances in which there is not a perfect match between the head noun and the preceding reference element, that is, cases in which the referent is not necessarily a noun, amounts to approximately one third of the total in both corpora, six cases in DCPSE out of 19 and 17 in COLT out of 53. It is worth noting that when restricting the analysis to the first section of the DCPSE, that is, to the 1958-1977 period, *and stuff* has an NP as a referent in all cases. Thus, the six cases recorded in this corpus correspond to the second period, 1990-1003. Cheshire (2007: 22) in her study reports a similar finding. In line with previous works on language change and grammaticalization (Hopper and Traugott, 1993; Fischer and Rosenbach, 2000), this may lead to postulating the existence of a possible process of decategorization of this item as an indicator of grammaticalization since there has been an important loss of some of its grammatical features and, consequently, semantic bleaching (Cheshire, 2007). Although the numbers are small, everything seems to indicate that the process of decategorization of this extender is more evident in recent times. Apart from this, an enumeration of three items instead of two is also occasionally found (29).

(29) Made with real vegetables <,,> and rice *and stuff* (DC/DIB20/156)

And stuff often occurs with a wide variety of discourse markers, such as *you know, I mean, sort of, I think*, etc. This is especially so in the case of adults, where in almost half of the examples recorded (47 percent), I find the presence of a word of this kind; in the speech of teenagers this is only of 30 percent. This finding, which is also consistent with previous research (Cheshire, 2007; Tagliamonte and Denis, 2010), could indicate that this general extender is gradually going through semantic changes, developing new pragmatic functions associated with it and, as a result, it does not need the support of

any other discourse particles. From this, it could be gathered that this general extender is playing a similar pragmatic role as that of these discourse markers. This seems to be particularly so in the case of young people where *and stuff* performs a function similar to that of a discourse marker, such as *you know*, for example. Once again, this phenomenon could be regarded as an instance of grammaticalization which is more clearly observable in the teenage talk.

INSERT TABLE 6

Particularly interesting is the occurrence of the forms *like*, *shit* and *just* which are exclusive to the teenagers' discourse. In this genre *like* clearly stands out in terms of its high frequency and it can perform different functions (Romaine and Lange, 1991; Tagliamonte and Hudson, 1999; Macaulay, 2001; Tagliamonte and D'Arcy, 2004). Apart from complementing this extender (*and stuff like this/that*), it very often behaves as a quotative verb,[8] the same as *go* or *say;* however, it can also function as a hesitational or linking device.

(30) They way she those things with like her face *and stuff,* I don't know, just the way she stands (CO/B133903/158)

And everything follows similar trends to those already noted for *and stuff* above. It is also more frequent in the spoken language of teenagers than in that of adults, almost twice as more, and it occurs mainly in positive declarative clauses. In this respect, this item seems to be more severely conditioned by the clause type than the previous one as is mainly found in declarative positive clauses.

INSERT TABLE 7

It is also interesting to note that this general extender always occurs in its reduced form in COLT while in DCPSE it is found with *else* on four occasions and with *like that* twice, all of these occurring in the early 1990s period.

As before, *and everything* may refer not only to nouns, both mass and count, but also to the whole previous clause and even to an adjective phrase. This is particularly so in the case of the COLT corpus where 21 instances of this kind out of a total of 66 examples are recorded, a proportion of 30 percent, 14 of them referring to the previous clause and the remaining 7 to an adjective phrase, as in the following:

(31) They are just be cool *and everything*. (CO/B136601/738)

However, in DCPSE only 10 examples of this type are identified without major differences between the two periods of time considered. Lists of three elements are not unusual either (32).

(32) I mean do they get your name and address *and everything*? (CO/B134103/42)

And everything also tends to co-occur with a wide range of discourse markers, such as *you know, I know, sort of, you see, like, well, anyway*, *I mean* and *just*. In this case only *I mean* appears in both corpora.

INSERT TABLE 8

In this case I do not identify a similar tendency to that of *and stuff* since the proportion of instances in which this general extender occurs with a discourse particle is similar in both corpora, around 25 percent. As before, no significant differences are recorded in this respect when the two periods covered by the DCPSE are compared.

And things is much more common in the language of adults than in teenagers' speech, five times more. This means that in this respect it follows the opposite tendency to the previous two general extenders considered, *and stuff* and *and everything*. In both corpora it is quite frequent to find it in combination with comparative forms, such as *like this, like that* or *of that kind*. This is especially true in the case of teenagers, 13 out of 22, that is, in 59 percent of the cases. As regards the behavior of this general extender in the two samples of the DCPSE, no significant differences are registered, the proportion of reduced forms of this extender being the same in the two periods, at around 63 percent of the total.

The previous findings also indicate that the degree of phonological reduction is inferior to that of *and stuff* and *in everything*, both in the language of adults as in that of teenagers. Regarding the reference element, and as a general rule, a plural count noun tends to be its anaphor (33). However, in about 25 percent of the cases in both corpora the whole previous clause can be the referent (34).

(33) All those people wearing jeans *and things*. (DC/DIB34/276).
(34) That Vega bloke and he jumps up *and things*. (CO/B141501/140)

Findings relating to the nature of the referent element in the two subcomponents of the DCPSE analysed are very similar, with no notable differences. Quite often, this general extender is part of a list of three and even of four elements instead of the usual one or two (35). This tendency is more clearly marked with this general extender than with the other two here considered.

(35) sort of experts and psychics and wise men *and things* like that. (CO/B137201/207)

INSERT TABLE 9

The clause type system does not seem to have any bearing on this extender since it generally occurs in positive declarative clauses. Very few cases are recorded of this item in negatives and interrogatives, 6 and 2 tokens, respectively.

As with the previous two general extenders, it is quite common to find a number of discourse markers co-occurring with it. The range or variety of these markers is more limited than with *and stuff* and *and everything*; it is reduced to only five: *you know, like, well, sort of* and *I mean*.

INSERT TABLE 10

As in the case of *and stuff*, the speech of adults shows a higher number of these markers than the speech of teenagers. The time variable does not seem to play any important role, with findings for adult language in the two periods being very similar. However, in teenage talk all indications suggest that these two general extenders, *and*

stuff and *and things*, may be going through some grammatical changes by adopting new pragmatic functions.

Table 11 below provides an overview of the behavior of these three extenders with respect to their occurrence in their simple/full form, reference element and co-occurrence with a discourse marker. Thus, these three general extenders tend to occur more often in their short form in the language of teenagers than in the case of adults.

And stuff and *and things* follow similar tendencies as regards the element they refer to in the two corpora analysed while in the case of *and everything* the percentage of an anaphor reference different from a NP is higher in the case of adults. Finally, the co-occurrence with a discourse marker is higher in the language of adults for the three general extenders considered although in the case of *and everything* the differences are really minimal. All this seems to indicate that these forms are going through different grammaticalization processes (decategorization, phonological reduction, semantic change, adoption of new pragmatic functions) and they may be found at different stages according to the variety considered, be it the language of adults or that of teenagers. However, it is in the language of teenagers where these indicators of grammaticalization are more clearly observed, especially as regards phonological reduction, semantic change and the conveyance of new communicative values.

INSERT TABLE 11

5.2.3. Discourse-pragmatic functions

In a preliminary analysis of the pragmatic behavior of these items, no major differences are perceived between the language of adults and that typical of teenagers. These general extenders may express multifunctional values in both varieties, being very often difficult to identify a particular one in a given context (Cheshire, 2007). This also explains why it is not really possible to carry out a quantitative analysis which may be considered as minimally reliable, especially when the number of examples considered is relatively high. The difficulty at ascribing a particular discourse function to these general extenders can be seen in the following conversation extract, which corresponds with the moment when two teenagers arrive late at school.

(36) A: You better run you know.
B: Eh?
A: They're all sitting down *and stuff*. We looked in the window. In the hall.
B: Wow, <unclear>
A: They're all in the hall. He's gonna get[well pissed off!]
(CO/B132503/174-8)

Here, it is not really known whether the speaker is referring to the fact that all the pupils have already sat down at their desks and are ready to start the class, or he intends to draw the interlocutor's attention to the fact that they are too late for school as the latter may not be fully aware of that. If in the first interpretation it would be closer to the set-marking function of this general extender, in the second it would be more that of creating rapport or establishing common ground. Contextual and prosody factors could be useful for this purpose. Overstreet's (1999: 26) claim regarding the usefulness of compiling one's own data to solve questions of this nature seems to be quite pertinent

here. Corpora data, however, although larger in size and more representative of what one wants to analyze, can be more limited in this respect.

Broadly speaking, the three general extenders considered in the present study perform three main pragmatic functions. Firstly, they serve to express something that is not clear and definite, either because the speaker cannot find the right word or does not recall all the terms necessary, while marking a set of items as belonging to a particular class, examples (37) to (40). This is what is referred to in the literature as the 'set-marking' or 'generalized list completing' function. Secondly, they are also markers of intersubjectivity (Schiffrin, 1990); in other words, they serve to convey interpersonal relationships by expressing the speaker's attitude towards the message being conveyed as well as towards the other participants in the conversation, example (41). This has been recurrently reviewed in the literature, from the classic works of Aijmer (1985) and Overstreet (1999) to the more modern of Cheshire (2007), and Tagliamonte and Denis (2010). Thirdly, they may perform a textual function by marking the end of a section of reported speech (42). As mentioned above, these functions may not be regarded as totally independent as it is quite common to find cases in which two of these functions overlap as in (43), where the intersubjective and textual functions are combined.

(37) You know what I mean uhn with O levels and A levels *and stuff like* that. (DC/DIA07/57)
(38) I mean do they get your name and address *and everything*? (CO/B134103/42)
(39) I was talking about, erm, cannabis and opium *and things* like that last night. (CO/B140202/68)

The set marking function is easier to identify when these general extenders are found in their full form, that is, when followed by a number of comparative forms (*like this/like that/of the kind/of the sort*). For example, in (37) the speaker is referring to a category that can be compared to the O and A levels,[9] in (38) the speaker wants to find out if they have to provide personal details, such as name and address while in (39) the speaker, by using *and things like that*, wants to make it clear that he is talking about substances similar in nature to opium and cannabis. When they function as a set-marking category, it is not at all uncommon that they occur in the middle of the speaker's turn as in the following:

(40) The way she those things with like her face *and stuff*, I don't know, just the way she stands, everything about her just makes me laugh. (CO/ B133903/158)

In general terms one could say that these three general extenders express this function in both adult and teenagers data in at least half of the cases considered.

In contrast to the previous examples, in (41) by using *and stuff* the speaker wishes to remain closer to the interlocutor; the general extender is used as a marker of solidarity and as a strategy to create rapport between the participants in the conversation.

(41) A: Did Bonnie enjoy herself in the end? Cos I know that like she said she did but I know she was getting really pissed off cos everyone was sticking on the music she wasn't interested in *and stuff*.

B: Er yeah I think she, yeah she did enjoy herself, that's what she said to me. (CO/B134101/87)

This is here also reinforced by the fact that the interlocutor takes her turn in the conversation immediately after the extender by expressing her agreement (*er yeah*). We find a similar case in the following:

(42) A: Yeah. I know but I mean like my mum was saying that you know… sometimes you're just too pissed to stop and you just com carry on *and stuff*.
B: Yeah. (CO/B134101/109-11)

A*nd stuff* also serves that purpose of creating rapport between two speakers but it also marks the end of reported speech. We could then say that the intersubjective and textual functions are here combined.

In the case of *and everything*, apart from the typical set-marking function as in (43), it is quite frequent for the speaker to make use of it as a strategy to intensify or heighten what is being said as in (44).

(43) Uhm it's a system that has been set up by biologists and ecologists and everything like it. (DC/DIB28/0220)
(44) Her dad's kind of very well brought up. He went to Oxford *and everything*. (DC/DIB14/312)

The good education of the character in question goes beyond his education in Oxford. The form *else* serves on occasions to convey more directly that intensifying value. This can be clearly seen in the following:

(45) It's all I've seen the film *and everything else*. (DC/DIB051/0115)

And things is the item of this set of three general extenders which tends to convey the set-marking function most often. However, it is, particularly when the speaker is giving brief accounts or telling stories, used as a way of involving the interlocutor more directly in what is being told. The narrator is interested in sharing the experience with the participants in the conversation.

(46) And it was a beautiful day and she had borrowed everybody's patio chairs *and things* and had them all over the lawn. It was rather nice actually cos we were all outside. (DC/DIB15/77)

In light of the above, it can be concluded that no particular pragmatic function of the three general extenders considered in this study (*and stuff, and everything, and things*) can be clearly and exclusively associated with the language of teenagers as was hypothesized above. However, it is true that in the language of teenagers some of these extenders, such as *and stuff* and *and everything* in particular, tend to lose their original set-marking function more often and are more commonly used to create solidarity and self-connection among the participants in the conversation as a marker of group and identity. By using these general extenders, teenagers promote closeness and their mutual identification as members of that particular community. This means that the use of these extenders could be regarded as distinctive features of the language of teenagers as they

serve the members of this social group to express a feeling of self-assertiveness and belonging to a specific class.

6. Conclusions

General extenders deserves close study because of their high frequency, their rapid evolution and development over time, especially in recent years, and their specific role in the language. They not only perform a set-marking and textual functions but they also serve to express interpersonal relationships between the speakers and their interlocutors.

The first data extracted from the ICE-GB and the BNC clearly illustrate that they are far more frequent in the spoken language than in writing as they are part of the interaction and negotiation of meaning processes between the participants in the spoken interaction. Furthermore, the results obtained from COLT and a comparable sample of the DCPSE show that, in broad terms, general extenders tend to be more common in the language of adults than in the teenagers' speech. Adults make use of a wider range of these items than teenagers. This finding is not fully consistent with one of my original hypotheses or with previous research since it was expected that a higher proportion of these general extenders in the language of teenagers would be found: these lexical items seemed to be more closely associated with colloquial, spontaneous and informal varieties. However, other parts of the findings are fully in keeping with previous studies since some of these general extenders, such as *and stuff, and that* and *and everything,* are more usual in the language of teenagers. Situational and contextual factors may also be at work here, as Cheshire claims (2007:15), together with the fact that the use of these categories may vary greatly from one speaker to another. In both adult and teenager speech, adjunctives were more common than disjunctives, although the differences were not very significant. Furthermore, *or something* was the most frequent of all in both groups. This is fully in line with Cheshire (2007) although it contradicts other studies, such as Overstreet (1999) and Tagliamonte and Denis (2010), where more disjunctives than adjunctives were observed, and even more so with Stenström et al. (2002) and Aijmer (2002), where the total number of adjunctives was seen to be approximately twice that of disjunctives.

The evidence studied also indicates that these items have increased their use in British English in recent times, this being particularly the case with *and stuff*. However, this should not be regarded as conclusive as the number of tokens analysed is not large enough; for this to be claimed, it would be necessary to analyse supplementary and recent data to confirm this tendency.

The three general extenders studied in this paper, *and stuff*, *and everything* and *and things*, share a number of common grammatical features but they also show important differences. *And stuff* is much more common in the language of teenagers than in the speech of adults; it may have not only a noun (mass or count) as anaphor but it can also refer to a prepositional phrase and, quite often, to the whole previous clause. In one third of the examples reported in both corpora, there is not a perfect match between the head noun and the corresponding anaphor. As suggested by Cheshire (2007), and Tagliamonte and Denis (2010), all this could be taken to mean that this item is undergoing or has already undergone a process of decategorization, which is a typical structural feature of grammaticalization. Such an idea is strengthened by the fact that this process of decategorization appears to be more evident in recent times, with the DCPSE data (1990-1993) in the present study clearly showing this tendency. Furthermore, this general extender also co-occurs very frequently with a number of discourse markers (*you know, I think, well, sort of, I mean, shit, just*) although the presence of the latter is not so clearly perceived in the language of teenagers. This, once

again, could be interpreted as if this general extender were adopting new pragmatic roles similar in nature and function to these discourse markers, particularly with teenagers. These two phenomena, decategorization and the adoption of new pragmatic functions, could be regarded as mechanisms of grammaticalization (Hopper and Traugott, 1993; Fischer and Rosenbach, 2002).

In the case of *and everything*, similar tendencies to those of the previous extenders are identified, although there are also some differences worth noting. It is generally found in positive declarative clauses, with only two examples out of a total of 107 recorded in the negative and interrogative. Furthermore, the proportion of discourse markers co-occurring with this general extender is similar in both samples, adults and teenagers. This could indicate that this general extender behaves differently from *and stuff* since it tends to preserve more its original use and meaning. On this occasion, the time variable in the adult data does not add any new information, with no major differences in the two samples from the DCPSE.

The third general extender considered, *and things*, shows higher frequency in the language of adults, five times more, indeed. There seem to be no reasons to explain this. It very often appears in combination with the comparative forms *like this*, *like that*, and is not unusual to find a list of three or even four preceding elements as anaphors. As with *and everything*, it is mainly found in positive declarative clauses. It also co-occurs with a limited number of discourse markers (*you know*, *like*, *well*, *sort of*, *I mean*), this being particularly so in the language of adults. In this respect, this general extender seems to be closer to *and stuff* than to *and everything* as, quite possibly, it may also be in the process of adopting new pragmatic roles. As was the case with the previous extender, no significant differences are identified in the two subgroups of the adult data.

Finally, these three general extenders not only perform the typical set-marking function but they also fulfil a textual one by marking the end of reported speech and serve to express interpersonal relationships between the speakers. They often have the purpose of expressing solidarity, self-connection and assumption of shared experience. This is especially observed in the language of teenagers. I suggest that for these speakers it is important to belong to a closed group and community in order to reaffirm themselves (Stenström, Andersen and Hasund; 2002; Rodríguez, 2002; Macaulay, 2005; Cheshire, 2007), this use of language helps them in that direction. Some of these general extenders become linguistic strategies used by the teenagers to construct their own personality and identify themselves as individuals and as a group. This means that in the language of teenagers these general extenders tend to lose their original set-marking function by assuming new pragmatic and discursive roles in keeping with the personal and social characteristics of this particular age group. This tendency is more clearly noticed in the case of *and stuff* and *and everything*. Furthermore, all seems to indicate that there are a number of factors that make general extenders develop important changes in their grammar and in their semantic and pragmatic meanings. These changes seem to be indicators of grammaticalization processes: decategorization, subjectification, pragmatic shifts, semantic change and morphological and phonological reduction. Thus, some of these general extenders lose certain morphosyntactic features of their original form by having categories other than nouns as referents (decategorization). They are developing a tendency towards greater subjectivity, that is, their meanings are becoming increasingly based on the speaker's attitude towards the proposition, what Traugott (1995) defines as 'subjectification'. They are losing some of their original set-marking content by acquiring new pragmatic meanings (semantic bleaching and adoption of new pragmatic values), and undergoing processes of phonetic reduction from complex to more simple forms. Some of them are also gaining in

frequency, another great factor of change and one which is often closely associated with grammaticalization. This finding is also, in broad terms, fully in keeping with previous studies, such as Overstreet and Yule (1997), Cheshire (2007) and Tagliamonte and Denis (2010). However, some minor discrepancies with previous studies have arisen regarding individual extenders. Thus, *and stuff* in the current study behaves as the most grammaticalized form in comparison with *and everything* and *and things*, particularly in the language of teenagers. Tagliamonte and Denis (2010), looking at English spoken in Toronto, and Overstreet and Yule (1997), looking at American English, come to the same conclusion as regards the changes occurring with *and stuff*; Cheshire (2007), however, does not record such a degree of grammaticalization for this extender in British English.

Some areas dealt with in this paper merit continued investigation: the role of variables, such as gender, social class, age and degree of formality in the speakers' selection of these general extenders. Similar studies of other varieties of English (Australian English, New Zealand English, Irish English) as well as across languages (Spanish versus English; French versus English, Portuguese versus English) would also be worth further consideration in the future. The pragmatic-discourse functions and recent changes and developments of these lexical items also require further examination.

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Corpora

BNC: *British National Corpus*. *The BNC Sampler*, XML version. 2005. Distributed by Oxford University Computing Services on behalf of the BNC Consortium. URL: <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>

COCA: *Corpus of Contemporary American English*. 2008. Brigham Young University. URL: <http://www.americancorpus.org/

COLT: *The Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language*. 1993. Department of English. University of Bergen. URL: <http://www.hd.uib.no/i/Engelsk/COLT/index.html>

DCPSE: *The diachronic corpus of Spoken English*. 1990-1993. Survey of English Usage. University College London. URL: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/ projects/dcpse/>

ICE: *International Corpus of English.* Survey of English Usage. University College London. URL: <http://ice-corpora.net/ice/>

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[1] This corresponds to an example taken from the COLT corpus, document with code number B132101/226.

[2] Placeholder words are items which are generally used when speakers cannot remember the exact word or term they want to refer to. According to Channell (1994:157), they can be divided into three categories: those which replace names, those which replace item names and those which may perform both functions. Under this category she lists words such as *thingy*, *thingummy*, *thingummyjig*, *thingummabob*, *whatnot*, *whosit* and *whatsit*.

[3] All the examples included in the study have been extracted from the COLT, DCPSE and BNC corpora and transcribed following their conventions therein. Each example is accompanied by a code indicating the corpus (CO for COLT, DC for DCPSE and BN for BNC), text number from which it was taken and the conversation turn or written reference given. Thus, in this particular case, the example provided was selected from COLT, text number B142504 and the corresponding conversation turn was 118. This system clearly facilitates the tracing and retrieving of the example in the original if necessary.

[4] Approximators are discussed in close detail in studies by Andersen (1988, 2000) and D'Arcy (2005).

[5] Phraseologisms are defined by Carroll (2008: 9) as subcategories of a single collostruct. For further information, see Stefanowitsch and Gries (2003).

[6] As the size of the samples considered varies greatly from one corpus to the other and also from the writing to the spoken data, normalised frequencies per 10,000 words were calculated when necessary. As before, the first raw data obtained had to be carefully filtered to restrict the analysis to the constructions under discussion. Thus, for example, in the case of the general extender *and things* my first search provided a total of 1,522 tokens, 352 units had to be discarded because they were not examples of the general extender use. Something similar applied to the rest of the general extenders considered.

[7] Although in this study only British English was considered, I conducted a preliminary and exploratory survey of the issue in American English with the aid of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), which provides general data as well as more specific information on the evolution of words and expressions over time. In this respect it differs from the BNC, which lacks this information. I restricted my search to the spoken sample containing 85 million words. In the case of the three general extenders *and stuff*, *and things* and *and everything*, findings indicated that *and everything* is the most common with a frequency per 10,000 words of 0.26, followed by *and stuff* (0.21) and the least frequent *and things* (0.18). As regards their evolution over time, these three forms were particularly common in the 1995-1999 period, decreasing slightly in use from 2000 to 2004, and experiencing a minor increase in the most recent four years, 2005-2009. This general tendency seems to apply, curiously enough, to all three extenders.

[8] The use of *like* as a quotative, under different forms *go like*, *it's like*, *is like* and *like* on its own, has been discussed extensively in the literature (Romaine and Lange, 1991; Andersen, 1998; Tagliamonte and Hudson, 1999; Macaulay, 2001, 2005; Winter, 2002; Stenström et al., 2002; Tagliamonte and D'Arcy, 2004; Tagliamonte, 2005), both as a recent, rapidly developing form across different varieties of English (British English, American English, Canadian English, Australian English, Scottish English) and as a typical feature of the language of adolescents and young people.

[9] In the British Secondary School system, Ordinary Level (or O' Level) and Advanced Level or (A' Level) qualifications were generally taken at ages 15-16 and 17-18 respectively, with A' Levels normally required if one intended to study at university. O'Levels were replaced by GCSE exams in 1988.

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