

**Waterford Older Speakers and Extended Family Corpus (WOSEFC)**  
**A corpus-based intra-varietal pragmatic analysis of general extender usage of extended family members from Waterford City, Ireland**

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**Abstract**

This paper adopts a corpus-based intra-varietal pragmatic approach to analyse the language use of a group of six older speakers aged 65-75 from Waterford city, Ireland, drawing on a 48,228-word corpus entitled *Waterford Older Speakers and Extended Family Corpus* (WOSEFC). The data, gathered through sociolinguistic interviews is intimate in nature (interactions between a nephew with aunts and uncles) and the study argues for the consideration of the extended family as a unique site within the definition of intimate discourse. The study explores the use of adjunctive and disjunctive general extenders. Whereas social distance is perceived minimal among immediate family, extended family need to engage in further pragmatic work to re-consolidate shared knowledge, bring to the fore their shared experiences and demarcate solidarity. The high level of positive politeness strategies is argued to be emblematic of the extended family interactions in this study. This high involvement style, as noted in other intimate sites, is coupled with higher levels of hedging when faced with difficult conversation topics or as a means to temper the sustained appeal to shared knowledge (Clancy 2016). This allows the intimates to manoeuvre linguistically and interpersonally to consolidate their inherent closeness based on trust, emotional intimacy, open communication of feelings and reciprocity.

**Keywords:** Irish English, intimate discourse, pragmatics, corpus linguistics, general extenders.

**Introduction**

This study provides a detailed analysis of general extenders present in a small corpus of spoken language of Irish English (IrE) between extended family members native to Waterford City, Ireland. The corpus entitled *Waterford Older Speakers and Extended Family Corpus* (WOSEFC) amounts to 48,288 words, inclusive of the researcher and six participants. The data was gathered from extended family (aunts and uncles) of the researcher through informal sociolinguistic interviews rendering the data intimate in nature. The study explores the function of the general extenders (GEs), the role these pragmatic features play in

interactions between extended family members and argues for the consideration of extended family as a unique site of intimate discourse in applied linguistics research. This paper is based on a broader MA research thesis which adopts a variational perspective controlling for the macro-social factors of gender and age which explores their impact on the use of discourse-pragmatic markers (D-PMs) and general extenders (GEs). This paper focuses solely on the nature of general extender usage and its role in intimate interactions.

This study builds directly on the work of Clancy (2016) which investigated the nature of intimate discourse in Irish English drawing on a 580,000-word corpus of intimate interactions between couples, immediate family and friends: *Limerick Corpus of Intimate Talk* (LINT), a sub-corpus of the *Limerick Corpus of Irish English* (LCIE). LINT consists of interactions between couples, family and close friends. The frequency counts of Clancy (2016) are drawn on for cross comparison purposes, where the individual items were included in his study. This work is unique in that it focuses also on general extenders not included in Clancy (2016) and interrogates their usage in the domain of intimate discourse- the extended family. Where direct comparison is not possible (the items were not analysed in the comparative LINT dataset), *the Limerick Corpus of Irish English* (LCIE) is used as a further reference corpus. A detailed functional analysis of the most common GEs in WOSEFC is also undertaken.

A background to the field of intimate discourse is first provided followed by a review of the literature pertaining to the functions of the GEs in IrE and their role in intimate interactions between familiars. The data and methods of the present study will be outlined in the next section followed by a functional analysis in the discussion. Conclusions on the nature of intimate interactions among extended family members will be provided in the final section.

## Background

### Intimate Discourse

Interaction with those close to us forms part of the most fundamental relationships in our lives. The notion of intimacy, however, is inherently difficult to define. It is deeply personal (Oswin & Olund 2010). Intimate relationships commonly refer to couples, parent-child relationships, sibling relationships and friendships (Saslove et al. 2022: 331). However, intimacy may be present in other contexts and has been argued to exist on a scale ‘as a matter of degree rather than of kind’ (Oswin & Olund 2010: 60). Importantly, intimate discourse may not always be present in a relationship that may be labelled intimate at first glance. The nature of interactions between speakers cannot be assumed to be uniform. Moreover, to have a close or intimate relationship with someone is not simply a given or a natural byproduct of being related to or considering someone a friend, it is asserted that there are certain conditions that need to be fulfilled to deem a relationship close or intimate. The negotiation and presence of four conditions has been shown to indicate intimacy within a relationship: trust, emotional closeness, open communication of thoughts and feelings and reciprocity (sharing our thoughts and engaging in close listening) (Buhrmester & Ferman 1987; Wilson 2016; Saslove et al 2022).

Clancy (2016: 171) in his monograph on intimate discourse in Irish English defines the field in the following manner:

...talk between couples, family and close friends in private, non-professional settings over an extended period of time characterised by self-disclosure, a shared physical space and quality of connection.

Each of these factors are evident in the relationships between the extended family members in this study. The interaction occurs in a private, shared physical space. The quality of connection between the researcher and the participants is inherently known and evidence of self-disclosure is borne out in the linguistic data. Trust, emotional closeness, open

communication of thoughts and feelings and reciprocity all feature in the interactions.

Heretofore, research on intimate discourse has not specifically included extended family as an intimate site in its own right. This study argues that the nature of intimate interactions between extended family, in this case, the interactions between a nephew with aunts and uncles presents distinctively to other sites of intimate discourse.

### **Vague Language and General Extenders**

To be vague in our language use is a purposeful choice and is indicative of a strong shared understanding between speakers (Carter & McCarthy 2006). Speakers engage consciously with vague language for various functions. There are two main functions of VL in discourse: (i) to hedge utterances and thus downplay their force, and (ii) to note ‘assumed’ shared knowledge between speakers and ‘to mark in group membership’. The first function is most often realised through approximation and the second function which draws on shared knowledge is that of a vague category marker (O’ Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter 2007: 178).

General extenders (GEs) have been researched in the literature under a variety of names such as vague categories, tags, terminal tags and extension particles (see O’ Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter 2007). Irrespective of the term, they follow the structure of an exemplar followed by a vague tag (e.g. *and things like that*). The speaker refers ‘obliquely to other members of categories which they assume their listeners will be able to fill in’ (Evison, McCarthy & O’ Keeffe 2007: 213). The meaning drawn from these markers are ‘socio-culturally grounded and are co-constructed within a social group that has a shared socio-historic reality’ (Cheng & O’ Keeffe 2015: 361).

GEs function to ‘extend otherwise complete utterances’ (Overstreet 1999: 3). These extenders may be organised into two groups: adjunctive extenders (beginning with *and*) and disjunctive extenders (beginning with *or*). The nature of these expressions is pragmatic as

they have ‘little obvious propositional meaning but... oil the wheels of conversational interaction’ (Beeching 2016: 1). These extenders enable speakers to draw on shared knowledge and function as engagement strategies in discourse.

Adjunctive GEs indicate that ‘there is maybe more (that could be said)’ indicating that more examples could be added and offering an appeal to the listener to conceptualise their own examples (Overstreet 2020: 47). It may occur that no specific category is indicated, and these extenders are known as ‘ad-hoc categories’ (Barsalou 1983 in Overstreet 2020: 48). For example, in the sentence ‘he was talking about exercise and all that’, the GE *and all that* does not refer to a particular category associated with exercise but could refer more broadly to topics related or unrelated that the other speaker can fill in. Disjunctive GEs indicate ‘there may be others (that can be mentioned)’ (Overstreet 2020: 48). For example, the disjunctive extender *or something* fulfils functions such as to indicate an approximation, to a ‘potentially incorrect statement’, or to hedge regarding the accuracy of what has been said. When an utterance may be placing an imposition on the interlocutor, the disjunctive *or something* may be viewed as a strategy of negative politeness by remaining tentative (don’t impose) (Overstreet 2020: 49).

### **Vague language in the intimate context**

Vague language (VL) is suited to intimate settings, where speakers rely on shared knowledge with their conversation partners (O’Keeffe, McCarthy & Evison, 2007). General extenders (GEs) are more common in informal settings and often cluster with other discourse-pragmatic markers (D-PMs) at the end of turns, offering speakers added protection before passing the conversational floor (Vaughan, McCarthy & Clancy, 2017).

GEs usage has been shown to be higher among familiars vis a vis more formal contexts (Overstreet 1999; Cheshire 2007; Murphy 2010; Clancy 2016). In Clancy (2016)

drawing on the 580,000-word *Limerick Corpus of Intimate Talk* (LINT) GE usage is more frequent among intimates or those who already have a close relationship, with a particular preference for disjunctive extenders. In this study, the topic of conversations and the purpose of the interactions were not controlled for and thus the nature of the subject matter of the conversations were not entirely considered in the findings. This is particularly relevant regarding the high degree of disjunctive extenders among familiars which may be due to challenging conversation topics, for instance. Other studies have shown preference for certain adjunctive and disjunctive forms according to setting, for example, where *and everything* is identified as the preferred adjunctive extender in one corpus of intimate data in Evison, McCarthy & O' Keffe (2007: 141).

## **Data and Method**

### **Data**

WOSEFC is comprised of data from six individual sociolinguistic interviews undertaken with extended family (primarily aunts and uncles) of the researcher. The corpus size is 48,288 words. With the researcher data removed, the corpus amounts to 35,492 words. The interviews were recorded using a voice recorder only without any visual record and were transcribed solely by the researcher. Consent forms were signed granting the researcher permission to use the data collected for the research thesis and future research projects. The participants were selected by the researcher due to the nature of their relationship, i.e. extended family. Pseudonyms are used to maintain anonymity.

In advance of engaging with the data collection, ethical clearance was granted from the relevant ethics board within the Department of English Language and Literature in Mary Immaculate College (MIC). This application considered factors such as consent, anonymity and confidentiality. The ethical implications of this study relate to the willingness of adult

participants to engage in the research project and the management of the data produced. A description of the period that the data would be held for along with the method in which the data will be stored, and for what use will be made of it was explained in detail to all participants prior to their issuing of consent to take part in the study.

For analytical and validity reasons, the frequency analyses in this study at times draw solely on the participants data and this is accounted for in the matriculation of the normalised frequency counts in each case. Sub-corpora were created for the following categories: Jenny corpus, Max corpus, Sharon corpus, Trevor corpus, Rachel corpus, Mitchell corpus, female corpus and male corpus.

Table 1 provides a breakdown in terms of gender and age as a guide for the reader in the qualitative analysis sections of this paper.

**Table 1**

*Participant information*

<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sub-corpus word count</b>
Jenny	Female	68	7038
Max	Male	69	7184
Sharon	Female	66	5494
Trevor	Male	74	6093
Rachel	Female	71	4737
Mitchell	Male	71	6545

## Method

The study centres itself in the domain of intra-variational pragmatics, utilising corpus methods. The research design ensured that the age, gender and nature of the discourse setting could be reliably compared and contrasted. The data of WOSEFC is compared to LINT, an approximately 600,000-word corpus of intimate interactions between couples, families and friends.

Corpus linguistics has traditionally been associated with large scale data collection and its interpretation allows generalisations to be made around frequency of specific language use across different domains. Due to technological advancements over recent years, corpora have grown in size and the availability of corpora across languages, domains and disciplines (outside of linguistics) has increased exponentially (O' Keffe & McCarthy 2021). Corpus linguistics is a methodological framework with its own unique systematic methods and principles (Paquot & Gries 2021). Despite the proliferation of large corpora studies, the advent of developing small corpora such as in this study allows researchers to not only engage with frequency analyses of pragmatic phenomena but to investigate their role in context and ultimately constitute their usage within a smaller, manageable dataset (Vaughan & Clancy 2013).

The study utilises Corrigan's (2015) 295,115-word corpus of Northern Irish English (NIE) as a framework for data collection. Key considerations included the interviewer's status as a native speaker, the familiarity between the interviewer and interviewees, and the interview environment (Corrigan 2015: 40-42). Most interviews were conducted in the participants' family homes, where the researcher had established familiarity with the participants. The general prompts from Corrigan (2015)—covering topics like 'school days,' 'holidays,' and 'festivities'—were also used, but the present study expanded these to include discussions about participants' daily lives, their children's experiences, and their careers.

While these prompts provided direction, the researcher prioritised maintaining an informal atmosphere, allowing for the conversation to flow naturally into other topics.

The data analysis used various corpus tools in Sketch Engine software. This particular software tool was made available on the MA in Applied Linguistics programme in Mary Immaculate College Limerick, in which this research was undertaken. It began with frequency lists (single items, 2, 3, and 4 multi-word units) compared with LCIE and/or LINT where applicable. To understand their function in context, concordance and collocation analyses were conducted. The researcher examined the node word's left and right contexts, identifying patterns and developing hypotheses. Collocation analysis, spanning five positions on either side of the node word, a common approach in such analyses, helped refine these hypotheses and explore clustering tendencies.

## Results

### General Extenders: frequency analysis

Multiple Word Units (MWU's) were drawn up in two-, three-, and four- units for analysis and these were compared to the LCIE. There were no general extenders evident in the two-word MWU list.

A three-word unit frequency list is shown in the table 2 for WOSEFC and LCIE.

**Table 2**

#### *Three-word MWU frequency list*

	<b>WOSEFC</b>	<b>LCIE</b>
1.	you know what	a lot of
2.	know what I	you know what
3.	what I mean	know what I
4.	you know and	going to be
5.	it was a	I think it

6.	at the time	you have to
7.	a lot of	do you know
8.	it was not	what I mean
9.	there was a	I think that
10.	that kind of	you want to
11.	<b>something like that</b>	you know the
12.	I think I	one of the
13.	<b>or something like</b>	and I was
14.	was going to	a bit of
15.	I was going	I think I
16.	do you know	at the moment
17.	a couple of	be able to
18.	when you were	there was a
19.	you know I	do you know
20.	do you know	to do it

In the three-word unit frequency list, the prominent items include broken forms of larger chunks (see table 5.2 for four-word MWUs) made up of the GE *or something*. The four-word MWU frequency list is shown below in table 3.

**Table 3**

*Four-word MWU frequency list*

	<b>WOSEFC</b>	<b>LCIE</b>
1.	know what I mean	know what I mean
2.	you know what I	do you know what
3.	<b>or something like that</b>	the end of the
4.	I was going to	I was going to
5.	do you know what	and the end of
6.	was going to say	you know the way
7.	when you were younger	a lot of people
8.	I think it was	or something like that
9.	<b>or anything like that that</b>	if you want to

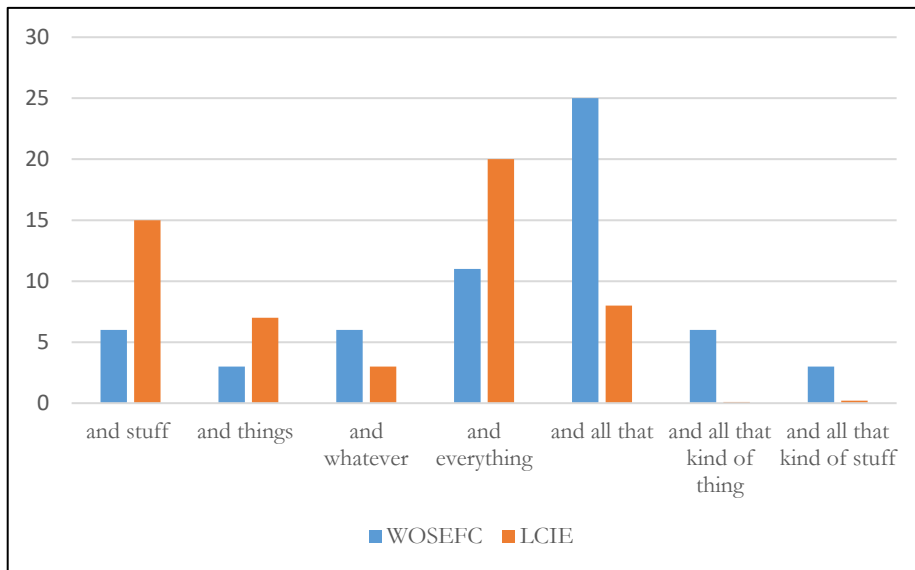
10.	that kind of thing	are you going to
11.	know that kind of	do you know what
12.	and there was a	a bit of a
13.	a couple of years	thank you very much
14.	that kind of way	do you want to
15.	you know that kind	I think it was
16.	it must have been	to go to the
17.	like that you know	the two of them
18.	to be able to	an awful lot of
19.	the name of the	a lot of the
20.	you know and he	going to have to

The disjunctive general extenders *or something like that* and *or anything like that* are most frequent GEs in this corpus. Although the vague approximator chunks *that kind of thing* and *that kind of way* are also frequent, these do not form the basis of the present study which details general extender usage only.

To further interrogate the type of GEs in WOSEFC, the corpus is searched based on Evison, McCarthy & O' Keefe (2007) using a concordance analysis. A further collocation analysis was conducted on both *and* and *or* to ensure no general extenders were missed from the data. As a starting point, the frequency of adjunctive GEs compared to LCIE is provided in figure 1.

### Figure 1

*Adjunctive general extenders WOSEFC and LCIE normalised per 100,000 words (researcher data excluded)*

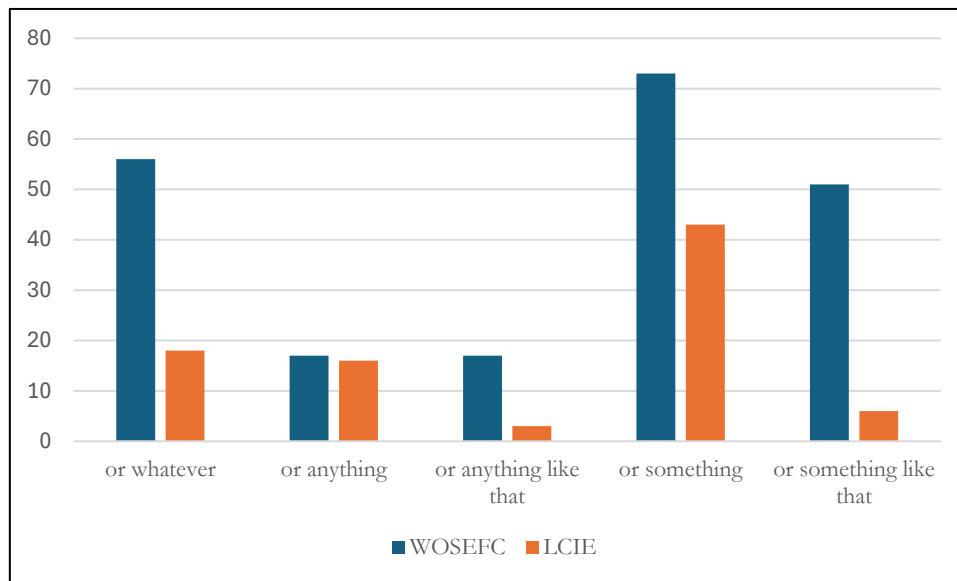


The adjunctive GEs *and all that*, *and all that kind of thing*, *and all that kind of stuff* and *and whatever* are all more frequent in WOSEFC vis a vis LCIE. *And all that kind of stuff* occurs 0.2 times per 100,000 words in LCIE and *and all that kind of thing* occurs 0.1 times per 100,000 words. *And all that* is 3 times more frequent, and *and whatever* is 2 times more frequent in WOSEFC. However, *And stuff*, *and things* and *and everything* are all more frequent in LCIE.

The frequency of disjunctive GEs compared to LCIE is provided in figure 2 below.

**Figure 2**

*Disjunctive general extenders WOSEFC and LCIE normalised per 100,000 words (researcher data excluded)*



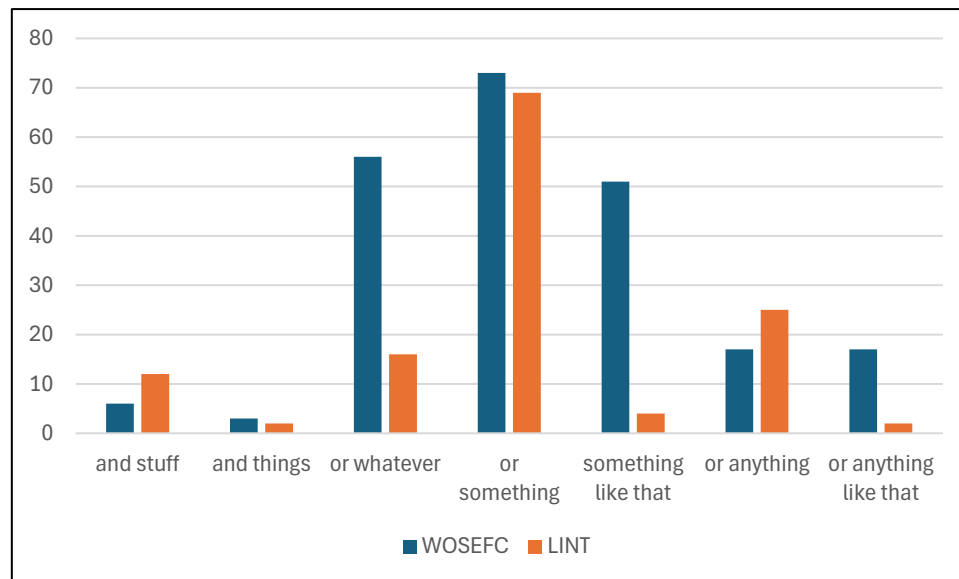
Overall, we see that disjunctives are particularly frequent in the WOSEFC corpus. *Or anything* has a similar frequency in WOSEFC (17 per 100,000 words) than LCIE (16 per 100,000 words) whereas *or something* is less frequent WOSEFC (34 per 100,000 words) than LCIE (43 per 100,000 words). *Or whatever* is 3 times more frequent (56 per 100,000 words) in WOSEFC than in LCIE (18 per 100,000 words). The most interesting findings are the high frequencies of the extenders *or something like that* and *or anything like that*. *Or something like that* (51 per 100,000) 8.5 times more frequent in WOSEFC than in LCIE (6 per 100,000 words). *Or anything like that* is 6 times more frequent (17 per 100,000 words) in WOSEFC than LCIE (3 per 100,000 words).

Speakers in WOSEFC show a preference for using longer disjunctive general extenders (GEs), which seem to hold less significance in LCIE. While functional analysis may explain their higher frequency, a comparison with the intimate dataset LINT will help provide some evidence if these frequency differences relate to the type of relationship between speakers (i.e., more intimate).

Figure 3 below provides a frequency comparison of the GEs *and stuff*, *and everything*, *and things*, *or something*, *or something like that*, *or anything*, *or anything like that* and *or whatever* in WOSEFC vis a vis the larger intimate dataset LINT from Clancy (2016).

**Figure 3**

***General extenders WOSEFC vs LINT (Clancy 2016: 139) (researcher data excluded)***



*And stuff* is less frequent in WOSEFC (6 per 100,000 words) than in LINT (12 per 100,000 words). *And things* occurs at a similar frequency in both corpora (3 per 100,000 words in WOSEFC and 2 per 100,000 words in LINT). The disjunctive extender *or anything* is less frequent in WOSEFC than in LINT. The disjunctive extender *or whatever* is 3.5 times more frequent in WOSEFC (56 per 100,000 words) than in LINT (16 per 100,000 words). *Or something*, is slightly more frequent in WOSEFC. Once again, the preference of the the speakers in this data for the longer disjunctive forms *or anything like that* and *or something like that* is borne out. *Or something like that* is 13 times more frequent and *or anything like that* is 8.5 times more frequent.

## Functions of adjunctive general extenders in WOSEFC

### *Shared understanding*

Many examples in the dataset relate to the primary function of an adjunctive GE to indicate that more could be added (Overstreet 2020). It is assumed the listener will recognise ‘the category in the air’ (O’ Keeffe 2006: 129). Extract (1) provides several examples of this:

(1)

<Rachel> Yeah I'd find it more yeah there's not enough water coming especially when you're doing your hair **and stuff**

<Jenny> She's good for the dates **and stuff**

<Max> Many many years ago Samuel said to me one day I've given up Facebook and Twitter **and all that**

### *Positive politeness: closeness marker*

In extract (2), Max uses the phrase ‘and all that craic’ without giving a detailed explanation of the technical subject matter, as it isn’t necessary for the conversation. The repeated use of the vague approximator ‘kind of’ in the same turn may show Max’s intention to keep the conversation relaxed and reduce any potential social distance (Clancy 2011) that might arise from discussing a specialized topic. This strategy, common before jargon or technical terms (Clancy 2016), is reinforced by the informal term ‘craic,’ adding a friendly tone. These techniques reflect positive politeness, demonstrating a desire for closeness and a familiar rapport with the listener.

(2)

<Max> I cover supply chain management I cover the em kind of very early business economics issues particularly and strategy and kind of all that area of porter and value chain analysis **and all that craic** so I cover all those

Speaking of the researcher’s grandmother, Rachel (extract 3) makes use of *and all that kind of stuff* as means of marking the shared understanding between them. ‘I don’t have to tell you everything since we are closely related’ (Aijmer 2013: 141).

(3)

<Rachel> Yeah sure she loved her politics She loved Dev sure **and all that kind of stuff**

*Hedging: negative politeness*

In extract (4) Trevor uses the phrase ‘and all that kind of thing’ to signal that some information is not important or that he does not wish to elaborate. This phrase serves as an evaluative tool, allowing a shift in the conversation toward a topic he finds more significant. As noted by Overstreet (2005: 1854), rather than assuming shared knowledge to justify not elaborating, the speaker indicates that the additional information that could be provided is of little importance.

(4)

<Trevor> That's where the brewery is that's where I ended up but 17 to about 18 a year and a half maybe I was in the Foundry and then I was on three days there or something and due to cutbacks **and all that kind of thing** so I was told to go down to the brewery they were looking for young fellas and I went down and ended up there 40-odd years ago

*And all that as emphasiser*

*And all that* functions may function as an emphasiser (Aijmer 2013). An example of this is seen in extract (5) where Trevor speaks about a discovery he made when clearing out his grandparents’ house after they died. The co-occurrence of the PM *now* also aligns with this as *now* has been noted to hold an emphatic function (Clancy & Vaughan 2024).

(5)

<Trevor> I remember I closed the house when he died and I handed the keys back to the corporation but there was a false ceiling actually there was a stairs up to an attic and there was a false ceiling and just inside the false ceiling there was a grenade shell. Now it was defused **and all that** I have it out there

## **Functions of disjunctive general extenders in WOSEFC**

*Approximation*

In extract (6), the *or something like that* disjunctive is employed twice in one speaker turn as the speaker recalls her childhood school days where they would go on a short excursion outside of the school grounds, marking for the listener that this may not be entirely accurate.

(6)

<Jenny> That they'd tell us it would go across to the gardens and might have the rosary **or something like that** you know with the sacred heart yeah It might be the feast day of a sacred heart **or something like that**

*Or something* is seen again to highlight that the statement may be potentially inaccurate, when Rachel, in extract (7), describes how little her mother would read newspapers when they were growing up.

(7)

<Rachel> I'm not saying she wouldn't look at the front page or the headlines **or something** but wouldn't be sitting down she just wasn't the type to em sit and read the paper and I am I am the same

*Negative politeness: tentativeness and hedging*

In extract (8), describing a traumatic accident as a child while blackberry picking, Jenny recounts her memory of the hospital and how lucky she was to have survived. The co-text surrounding this disjunctive extender is made up of several hedges (I'd, you know what I mean) and pragmatic markers (now). *Now* functions as an evaluative stance marker (Clancy & Vaughan 2024) of how serious the speaker views the accident and what transpired. The hedges present, forming part of a negative politeness strategy along with the disjunctive extender co-operate in reducing the force of the utterance issued on this difficult topic.

(8)

<Jenny> I think if I had been a half an hour longer on the road I would have been dead or twenty minutes **or something like that** now it's frightening you know what I mean still when I'd be telling it

*'Something of little importance'*

The disjunctive extender, *or whatever* may mark indifference or details as unimportant, or to dismiss something (Overstreet 1999: 123-124). This is seen in some examples in WOSEFC; however, it is primarily associated with the speaker distancing from an assertion, in the sense that the content to which it refers to is irrelevant. It is more closely associated with the function ‘this is something of little importance’ than it is to mark ‘I don’t care or indifference to a subject.

Rachel, in extract (9), acknowledges the name of the Head Sister who ran her primary school with an air of indifference towards the correct title. It may also function as a filler while Rachel searches for the correct word. However, it is worth noting that this followed a conversation about teachers in the school and the strict regime which was enforced.

(9)

<Rachel> Yeah that was the convent and the the the what did they call it at the time Mother Superior **or whatever** she is

In extract (10), Trevor describes the specialized food his dog eats but distances himself from the need for accuracy in his assertion, downplaying its importance due to the informal, familial nature of the interaction. The use of *you know* at the end of his turn invites the listener to contribute further, highlighting the shared knowledge between the speakers (O’Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter 2007).

(10)

<Trevor> Ah the usual we get stuff in Pet Mania over there you know the non - allergic stuff **or whatever** you call it It's basic it's either chicken with grain or no grain sorry because that causes the allergies and it could be fish and something else you know

### *GEs and turn yielding*

Both adjunctive and disjunctive extenders adopt a turn yielding or signalling function in WOSEFC. This has previously been found by Vaughan, McCarthy & Clancy (2017).

Jenny (extract 11) discussing the innocence of her childhood signals abruptly that she has finished with the turn, although there is evidence that *and stuff* functions as a hedge in this turn also.

(11)

<Jenny> We were very sheltered as Mitchell says

<Researcher> Nice in one way as well you know

<Jenny> Yeah innocent kind of games **and stuff**

*And all that* and *and all of that* as illustrated in table 5, occurs at a much higher frequency in a turn yielding function than the other GEs in the data. It appears to function to check with the researcher ‘should I continue’ with the response often coming in a backchannel form. See extract (12) for an example of this:

(12)

<Trevor> It's just ready to be demolished down there but it was a bottling hall bottling stout and they had their own oranges and lemonade **and all that**

Table 4 below provides a quantitative illustration of the number of occurrences broken down according to GE in WOSEFC that occurs with a turn yielding function.

**Table 4**

*Turn yielding function of GEs in WOSEFC (researcher data excluded)*

General extender	Total no. of turn yielding instances per total occurrences
and stuff	2/6
and things	0/1
and all that	8/12
and all them things	0/1
and all of that	2/2

and whatever	0/2
and everything	1/6
or that	0/1
or anything	0/5
or anything like that	0/8
or something	12/30
or something like that	5/20
or whatever	0/9

Although, GEs in WOSEFC have a turn yielding function, most of their occurrences are not associated with this function. It is a noteworthy finding, however, that *and all that*, the most common adjunctive extender in this data, seems to occur predominantly in this function.

However, it is important to note that GEs similar to D-PMs may hold multiple functions, and this is evident in the data, where *and all that* simultaneously functions as a turn yield, while marking common knowledge and also at times, functioning as a hedge.

The occurrence of clustering D-PMs and GEs or other vague category markers shown in previous studies (Vaughan, McCarthy & Clancy 2017) has not proven true of the data in this corpus. From a collocation analysis five steps to the right and left of the node item, the only two vague language items with regular collocates included *or something (like that)* and *kind of. You know* collocates after *or something like that* (7/64 occurrences in the data). *Just* occurs (11/149 occurrences) preceding *you know* within five positions to the left. However, as noted throughout the functional analyses section, other D-PMs and pragmatic items combine and co-occur over a lengthy speech turn or multiple turns to heighten the overall pragmatic impact, such as in the case of hedging.

## Discussion

### Functions of GEs in WOSEFC

WOSEFC is characterised by-vague language usage. As previously identified (Overstreet 1999, Aijmer 2013), GEs play a crucial role in the speech of intimates, with both adjunctive and disjunctive extenders evident in the WOSEFC data. GEs are fundamental for negotiating shared space between speakers and demarcating their shared cultural and historical experiences (Cheng & O’Keeffe 2015). While adjunctive extenders mark shared knowledge, they are used less often than disjunctives. The preference for *and all that* as a turn-yielder, noted in the results section, likely arises from the interview format employed in data collection as a turn yielder.

All examples of disjunctive extenders serve to hedge the force of their respective utterances. Among these, *or something* is the most frequently used disjunctive extender in WOSEFC, while *or whatever* is also prominent, primarily indicating that specific details are of little importance and do not require elaboration. Disjunctives are overwhelmingly favoured in this context, particularly *or something*, *or something like that*, *or whatever*, *or anything* and *or anything like that*. This preference aligns with findings from other intimate contexts, such as conversations among couples, immediate family, and long-term friends (Clancy 2016). Thus, this research supports Overstreet and Yule's (1997) finding that disjunctives are more common among intimates, reinforcing Clancy's (2016) argument that disjunctives serve as more powerful markers of intimacy compared to adjunctive GEs.

To revisit the issue raised in the literature review regarding Overstreet's (2011: 300) observation that studies using interviews for data collection often report a higher prevalence of adjunctive GEs in contexts where disjunctive GEs may be expected, this study confirms that, at least within the analysis of intimate language in this corpus of extended family

discourse, the use of a sociolinguistic interview as the primary data collection method is effective and does not significantly distort GE usage. However, the methodological choice to separate the interviewer's speech data from frequency analyses may have contributed to this outcome.

### **The extended family: a novel site of intimate discourse**

Whereas social distance is perceived as 'negligible' in family discourse (Clancy 2016: 32), speakers in WOSEFC do work to reduce social distance and to maintain a relaxed atmosphere. The high level of positive politeness strategies (through the use of adjunctive extenders as well as other D-PMs such as *you know*<sup>1</sup>) may be necessary in extended family interactions where the nature of their relationship is arguably more separate and thus the re-connecting and re-establishing of bonds of solidarity may require further work than is the case in the discourse of immediate family and couples. This interactive, high involvement style allows the intimates to successfully re-affirm their solidarity and joint experiences, indicative of the inherent closeness shared between them.

Hedging and negative politeness strategies in WOSEFC are primarily achieved through disjunctive GEs and the discourse markers *you know*, *as like*, *just*, *now*, *sure*, and *I think* (though these were not analysed in this paper). While the use of sociolinguistic interviews was considered a potential influencing factor, the analyses indicate that the increased hedging is more closely related to the discussion topics than to the medium itself.

The phenomenon of the clustering of other pragmatic items following GEs in Vaughan, McCarthy & Clancy (2017: 218) to offer intimates extra pragmatic 'protection' was not particularly evident in this data save several instances of *you know* following the

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<sup>1</sup> You know is the most frequent D-PM in WOSEFC and was shown in the larger research project upon which this paper is based to function primarily as an engagement marker and positive politeness strategy.

disjunctive *or something*. Although other D-PMs may not occur within the immediate environment of GEs in WOSEFC frequently, it is evident that other pragmatic items function over extended or multiple turns, to achieve an effect, in which we may confirm that they do indeed operate in concert with one another (Vaughan, McCarthy & Clancy 2017), although not necessarily clustered close together.

In addition to this, Clancy (2016:169) in his exploration of the friend site of LINT, notes that higher level of hedging may be present to temper the ‘continuous appeal’ to shared knowledge and common ground that is indicative of this context. The nature of extended family discourse may not be ‘meta-hedged’ (Clancy 2011: 142) in the same manner as immediate family discourse and thus necessitates the linguistic realisation in this context. Thus, the means to which extended family maintain their relationship presents distinctively, although with some similarities, to previous intimate discourse sites of IrE as outlined in Clancy (2016). These include high usage of disjunctive general extenders, vague language items more broadly, and other high involvement markers such as the D-PM *you know*.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the base argument of this study contends that extended family ought to be considered as a distinct intimate discourse site from close family and couples, as outlined in Clancy (2016). Although, many of the hallmarks of other intimate discourse sites are indeed present in the data, such as the ‘high involvement’ (Clancy 2016: 169) style of the discourse, achieved through adjunctive extenders, the high frequency usage of the D-PM *you know* and the high degree of disjunctive general extender usage. It is argued that the higher level of hedging present may be emblematic of extended family discourse where further pragmatic work is necessitated due to the nature of the relationships of extended family members, although as noted consistently throughout this study, the context and content of the interactions must always be taken in to account and it is not possible to ascertain with

certainty that these linguistic features would be present in all sites of extended family data. Overall, this study has demonstrated the importance of acknowledging extended family as an intimate discourse site and including it in the definition of intimate discourse as expounded in applied linguistics research.

An important direction for future research is to further hypothesise and develop the characteristics associated with the intimate discourse site of the extended family (outside of *you know* and GEs). This may be achieved using similar small corpora among various age groups and geographical locations, or through the development of larger corpora representative of this domain. It would be important to focus on other features commonly associated with intimate discourse in these studies (i.e. vocatives, personal pronouns, deictics etc).

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