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**“The use of epistemic formulaic fragments in
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DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

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Vienna, April 2015

Signature

...to my mum and to my dad

...моей маме и моему папе

...to my husband Pierre

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List of abbreviations

COCA	the Corpus of Contemporary American English
CTP/CTP-phrase	complement-taking predicate (according to Noonan 1985: 43) (cf. Thompson 2002)
EFFs	epistemic formulaic fragments
IU	intonation unit
NP	noun phrase
PP	prepositional phrase

1. Introduction

This thesis explores the use and functions of the four frequently-occurring ‘epistemic formulaic fragments’ (EEFs) (Thompson 2002), viz. *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I presume* and *I assume*, in American English conversations through the lens of formulaicity. Employing a *formulaic language* lens for the analysis of EEFs means that the primary aim of the present study is to investigate formulaic features, which characterise the formulaic use of EEFs. These features will be traced in the use of EEFs (e.g. frequency, fixedness and variability, positional mobility, *zero-complementiser*) and in their functions, i.e. their “new” pragmatic functional properties which emerged due to the different development processes (e.g. grammaticalisation, frequent use, the subsequent shift from the concrete compositional meaning to the abstract pragmatic non-compositional meaning, etc).

Formulaicity is a multifaceted phenomenon that has been characterised and defined in different ways (cf. Wray & Perkins 2000: 3) which are summarised in Section 2, where the theoretical foundation behind the formulaic language research, formulaic features of EEFs under study, as well as the explanation and definition of EEFs (Thompson 2002) are also presented. Section 3 outlines the research into the functions of EEFs done so far and provides a specific set of the functions of EEFs which will be identified and analysed in the present thesis. This delimited set of the functions of EEFs is based on the interactional (Kärkkäinen 2003) and other communicative functions (Kaltenböck 2010) (Subsections 3.4-3.8).

This paper aims to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What EEFs are used with *that*-complementiser and with *zero*-complementiser in COCA? How frequent are the different EEFs in the corpus, how are they positioned within the associated clause/s, and which type of host construction do they have in their scope?
2. What are the functions of EEFs in conversational discourse and which of them associate with particular positions within the clause?

In addition to answering these questions the current study aims at revealing other peculiarities of the use of EEFs in conversational discourse (e.g. preceding linguistic units, occurrence in declarative clauses) (cf. Subsections 6.6-6.7).

In order to answer the above research questions, an empirical corpus-based research will be carried out in this study. It combines the quantitative and qualitative research methods and uses a special coding schema (Section 5) for coding and analysing the corpus data extracted from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).

The results of a detailed analysis of 200 spoken occurrences in COCA are given in the sixth section, which also provides the reader with the description, statistical evaluation and graphical presentation of these findings that are supported by the illustrative examples. The final section will summarise the research according to the results of the analysis, drawing a conclusion about the use and functions of EFFs in conversational discourse.

1.1. Why this topic

Language is one of the most important means of communication among people, used by people every day and everywhere almost automatically and subconsciously. The nature of language is highly complex and extremely fascinating at the same time. That is why people have always been striving to investigate this “powerful system in which very complex and diverse meanings can be formulated and conveyed to other people” (Wierzbicka 2006: 17) from different perspectives. But even after thousands of years language still remains an enigma. Despite numerous studies on language and communication, language – “the ultimate puzzle of human mind” (Akmajian 2001: 612) – still offers many unresolved questions, so that with every discovery in linguistics people are trying to piece together the clues in a logical way in order to get nearer to the full understanding of the phenomenon of *language*.

Language as a tool for communication offers a lot of ways which people can use to express their thoughts and ideas in order to communicate with each other. Origgi & Sperber (2000: 140) indicate that “[l]anguage use consists in the expression and communication of thoughts”. The ability to use language enables people to understand each other. Such a sharing of ideas and the understanding of each other is also an essential prerequisite for the existence and functioning of any community, as mentioned by Kandiah (1995: xxxi):

Community is created through communication, in a discourse which uses linguistic patterns and discursive conventions whose nature and manner of use are agreed on or authorized by those who go to make the community.

Indeed, using language implies following the conventions of communication, regulated by a particular community which, in turn, influences and fosters the use of different linguistic patterns. Some of these patterns serve as “tacit agreements, which the members of a community presume to be shared by every reasonable co-member” (Coulmas 1981: 4) and which are known as ‘routine formulae’ (ibid.). Such “conventionalized structural patterns” (Scheibman 2002: 1) are subsumed under the term *formulaic language* (See discussion on terminology in Subsections 2.1). Though the existence of formulaic language is universally acknowledged by most linguists, “consensus about what it is exactly is severely limited” (Wray 2008a: 9). The researchers seem to not only characterise formulaic language in

different ways, e.g. according to its form or function, but also define the phenomenon from various perspectives, using a variety of data which originate from different sources and extracted for different purposes. As a result, there exists neither generally accepted clear and standardised definition of formulaic expressions, nor well-formulated criteria for their determination. Wray (2008a: 11) even indicates that “any string of words might turn out to be formulaic, and it might take a century or more for that to become fully evident”. The exploration of one of the numerous types of formulaic language chosen for this thesis will be a challenging and simultaneously exciting task. But before moving on to the description of these specific formulaic expressions (see more detailed description in the following Subsections), it is necessary to emphasise the role of formulaic expressions/phrases for communication and provide some reasons for the selection of the complex and ambitious topic of the current study.

Formulaic expressions are manifold in their form and functions, and are an indispensable part of verbal interaction. They are represented by ‘prefabricated sequences of words’ (Wray & Perkins 2002: 1) that are essential for daily communication, since they “make the business of speaking (and that of hearing) easier”, for the use of which the only thing that the speaker needs to do is “to retrieve [them] from the dictionary instead of building [them] up from its constituents” (Kuiper 1996: 3). The phrases formed in this way serve as a kind of ‘pre-patterned’ schemas, which “in effect are mediators for human language competence and idiomatic language use” (Hall 2009: 1). Moreover, they contribute significantly to the ‘speech economy’ (Hymes 1974: 447) and processing efficiency (Pawley & Syder 1983), thereby “mak[ing]” “communication more orderly because they are regulatory in nature” (Yorio 1980: 438). In other words, people do not need to make much effort to analyse the grammatical structure of each sentence, but make use of ‘prefabricated’ phrases, and, consequently, integrate such ready-made phrases into conversation effectively to make it easier and quicker for the interlocutor to get the message. Furthermore, due to the formulaic nature of the phrases in question, they have “a processing advantage over creatively generated language” (Conklin & Schmitt 2008: 72). It is also generally accepted that the use of the pre-constructed formulaic language helps people produce fluent and native-like language (cf. Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992; Wray 2002; Schmitt & Carter 2004, 2010). Importantly, using formulaic language one can fulfil particular interactional aims and maintain the conversation (Wray & Perkins 2000: 10).

Though formulaic language is reported to be “extremely prevalent in both spontaneous speech and writing” (Shaoul & Westbury 2011: 172) and is often referred to as “a substantial

constituent of language overall” (Martinez & Schmitt 2012: 300), in this thesis I will put emphasis on its use in conversational discourse, more precisely, on naturally occurring speech. The reason for this particular focus is motivated, on the one hand, by my personal interest in spoken language and, on the other hand, by the fact that its spontaneously produced units offer an ideal material for the investigation of the use and functions of recurrent patterns/sequences of words, i.e. formulaic expressions. Taking into account that the exploration of speech may reveal essential aspects of the ‘real’ immediate use of language, since it is “the most frequent type of linguistic activity that people engaged in” (Scheibman 2002: 11), the examination of the selected formulaic phrases in the present study will show how these ready-made expressions are effectively integrated into conversations and what functions they fulfil in them.

This thesis investigates epistemic formulaic fragments (EFFs), such as *I think*, *I guess*, etc. which are one of the most frequent phrases that are used in spoken language (cf. Thompson & Mulac 1991, Scheibman 2001, Aijmer 1997, etc.), and the variety of which in Modern English can hardly be compared with any other European language (Wierzbicka 2006: 206). Being fascinated by the uniqueness of EFFs in English, I endeavour to investigate the use and functions of these frequently-occurring and highly routinised phrases, which are used by each speaker in everyday conversation.

The exploration of the chosen formulaic expressions is highly interesting, though challenging, because these phrases are so different, numerous, multifunctional, and important that every study devoted to this phenomenon contributes not only to the development of research into formulaic language, but also to the general understanding of communication and the role of *language* in it.

1.2. Research questions and methodological approach

This Subsection includes a detailed presentation of the research questions, thereby outlining the methods, source data and research procedure developed in this study.

The current thesis aims to explore the peculiarities of the use and functions of frequent EFFs in American English conversations. As the title of the thesis indicates, it is focused on the usage of EFFs in spoken discourse. The main research question of the study is as follows:

How are EFFs used in the American English conversational discourse?

In order to be able to answer this primary research question in the current thesis it is also important to elaborate on the following additional research questions, which are subdivided into those which are concerned with the quantitative (1) and qualitative (2) data analysis:

1. What EFFs are used with *that*-complementiser (cf. “*finite indicative complements*” (Thompson 2002: 126) and with *zero*-complementiser in COCA?

How frequent are the different EFFs in the corpus (COCA)?

How are they positioned in discourse (i.e. within the associated clause/s) and which type of host construction do they have in their scope?

2. What are the functions of EFFs in conversational discourse?

What functions of EFFs associate with particular positions within the turn/clause?

What are the features that characterise the EFFs as formulaic phrases and determine their functioning in discourse?

The above subdivision of the research questions implies that both quantitative and qualitative analyses will be carried out in this study. To deal with questions in point (1), the corpus data elicited from the spoken American English (COCA) will be used to conduct a quantitative investigation of certain EFFs, to identify their frequency and distribution in the corpus, as well as their positions, points of insertion, and the type of their scope. Moreover, these quantitative data will be further analysed in order to delimit the set of the EFFs in the current thesis (cf. Subsection 5.1.3): the range of EFFs will be narrowed down to only four EFFs, which will be selected according to their overall frequency, frequency of their appearance without *that*-complementiser, and, above all, their closest relation to the *I think*-meaning, i.e. the meaning of a thinking process. A detailed quantitative analysis of these formal characteristics of the delimited set of EFFs is aimed at elucidating the uses of EFFs in conversations, which, in turn, will not only provide useful information about the features which characterise the formulaic uses of EFFs, but also make it possible to undertake further qualitative research into the functional properties of EFFs in discourse (2), utilising the elicited corpus data and the results of quantitative exploration (e.g. positions of EFFs, etc.). This qualitative analysis is mainly concerned with the identification and interpretation of the interactional and other communicative functions of EFFs they fulfil in conversations. In addition, the exemplification of the functions of EFFs should show how multifunctional and overlapping they may be, and whether some of them may depend on the positions or scope of

EFFs. On the whole, this thesis combines the quantitative and qualitative methods “with the hope of offering the best of both worlds” (Dörnyei 2007: 20).

As already mentioned above, in order to examine EFFs quantitatively, I will make use of corpus data. The selected corpus serves as a basis for the analysis and interpretation of the phrases under consideration in the current study. Therefore, this thesis constitutes a corpus-based investigation, which is aimed at answering the above set of research questions effectively and providing convincing evidence by using naturally occurring spoken data collected from the largest freely-available corpus of American English – the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Not only have the 450-million-words size of this corpus (the spoken component contains 95 million words), its representativeness and naturalness been the reason for choosing it, but also its regularly updated content and well-structured online interface have made it particularly suitable for the investigation of the current use of the phrases under study (cf. Subsection 5.1). Furthermore, previous research into EFFs or similar phrases (e.g. Scheibman 2002, Kärkkäinen 2003, Van Bogaert 2006, Kaltenböck 2010, etc.) has demonstrated how effectively corpus data may be used to explore these formulaic phrases.

At this point it is necessary to present briefly the whole research procedure developed in this thesis. Due to study limitations, for the demonstration and analysis of the features which characterise the use of EFFs in conversations I will elicit 200 instances (excerpts of transcribed texts) of the four EFFs from COCA, viz. *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I presume*, *I assume*, i.e. 50 the most recent instances of each EFF (cf. Subsection 5.1.3 devoted to the process of the delimitation of EFFs). As the next step, some of the formal features of the given EFFs, such as their positions, points of insertion, etc. will be rigorously coded and entered into a specially designed Excel table. The coded data will be then further examined and analysed in detail. Lastly, the results of the corpus investigation will be statistically evaluated, presented graphically and discussed. Such a way of approaching the use of EFFs guarantees that each instance of EFFs will be analysed thoroughly and that the formulaic features considered in this study will be successfully identified and interpreted. Finally, and most importantly, the research design evolved in the current thesis ensures that the evidence which will be obtained in the course of the corpus analysis of EFFs will make it possible to answer the primary research question in a convincing way, since the statistically significant and rigorously coded data are needed in order to deal with it, i.e. to trace the features which characterise the formulaic use of EFFs in conversational discourse.

In addition, it should be noted that while the majority of the formal characteristics of the use of EFFs in discourse (e.g. positional mobility) will be examined in each case of EFF, the functional ones will only be exemplified and briefly discussed. This means that no attempt will be made to calculate the exact number of each function performed by EFFs in discourse because of two main reasons. First, due to their multifunctional character, the identification and coding of all possible, often overlapping, functions of EFFs would have been a relatively time-consuming and laborious task, requiring a detailed contextual analysis of two hundred elicited corpus excerpts, in which more than one function could have been attributed to almost each EFF. Secondly, the process of the determination of the functions of EFFs itself is quite problematic, since there exist no strictly defined formal characteristics which would have made it possible to identify the functions of EFFs in discourse. In other words, the analysis of the functions of EFFs is based predominantly on the observations of previous studies and my previous research (and my personal interpretation) rather than on clearly defined rules of their identification. Therefore, this thesis is confined to the exemplification of certain interactional and communicative functions of EFFs proposed by Kärkkäinen (2003) and Kaltenböck (2010), the determination and calculation of which would not have produced reliable and comparable results. In general, the functional analysis of EFFs in the current study will only serve the purpose of the illustration of the functions which these phrases may perform in discourse, with an emphasis on the features which characterise their formulaic use and may determine their functioning in conversations in this way.

In the light of the foregoing, it may be stated that the adoption of a quantitative-qualitative methodological approach and the utilisation and rigorous coding of American English conversational corpus data are the primary strategies for dealing with the main research question in this study. Conducting my research in this way, whereby the examination of both the 'behaviour' in discourse and the formulaic nature of the EFFs in conversational discourse is possible, will help better understand the complex phenomenon of formulaicity. The choice of this 'formulaicity' perspective (i.e. looking at EFFs as positionally mobile, fixed conventionalised epistemic formulas which perform various pragmatic functions) is motivated by my personal interest in challenging research into formulaic expressions and my primary research focus is on the formulaic features of EFFs, which may be traced in the use (frequency, fixedness, positional mobility, the shift from semantic meaning to abstract pragmatic meaning) and the functions they fulfil in discourse (particular pragmatic functions, interactional and other communicative functions, multifunctionality of EFFs).

In conclusion, the study considers the question of which of the abovementioned formulaic features may be traced in the use and functions of EFFs in American English conversational discourse. Foregrounding the features which characterise the formulaic use of EFFs in conversational discourse and identifying these in their use and functions by implementing methods of quantitative and qualitative analyses and using naturally occurring corpus data should answer the basic research question and shed light on the peculiarities of the use of these highly routinised phrases frequently used in everyday speech.

1.3. Organisation of the thesis

This Section provides a brief overview of the organisation of the current thesis.

After the introduction section (Section 1), Section 2 explains and describes the formulaic phrases under investigation – EFFs. The aim of Section 2 is twofold. On the one hand, to describe the formulaic expressions under study – EFFs, and on the other hand, to demonstrate the approach by which they will be investigated – *formulaic language* perspective. More precisely, the first Subsection (2.1) presents the variety of existing definitions of EFFs, thereby stressing terminological differences. It also provides a working definition of EFFs used in this study. The second Subsection (2.2) is concerned with the way of employing a *formulaic language* approach in the analysis of EFFs in this research. It starts with a brief overview of the diverse terminology of formulaicity, main research areas, studies and research into formulaic language which has been done so far. Moreover, it explains why Wray and Perkins' (2000: 13-14) classification of three central functions of formulaic language will not be used in this study for the functional analysis of EFFs. Subsection 2.2 discusses the features that characterise the formulaic use of EFFs, namely their frequency (Subsection 2.2.1), fixedness or invariability (Subsection 2.2.2), positional mobility/order of the host clause (Subsection 2.2.3), the shift from propositional/concrete compositional to pragmatic/abstract non-compositional meaning (Subsection 2.2.4), and their structure, form and length (Subsection 2.2.5). Considering these features and analysing EFFs for their presence in conversational discourse will show in which way the EFFs are formulaic, which will help answer the research question raised in this thesis: how are these formulaic phrases used by American English speakers? And what functions do they perform in the American English conversational discourse?

After the presentation of the features which characterise the formulaic use of EFFs in conversations in Subsection 2.2 (i.e. formal features/parameters), Section 3 seeks to illustrate the functions of EFFs which they fulfil in conversational discourse (i.e. functional features)

and is divided into eight Subsections. First of all, Subsection 3.1 outlines a broad variety of functions of EFFs that have been defined so far, thereby highlighting their multifunctional nature. In order to shed light on the functions which may be attributed to EFFs, Subsection 3.1 will also present a short overview of the various pragmatic functions of EFFs identified in previous research studies. In addition, Subsection 3.2 reviews the domains (or levels) in which pragmatic markers (i.e. EFFs) may function, thereby demonstrating that the phrases under consideration are “exclusively functional in that they do not directly partake in the propositional content of the utterance in question, but occur ‘outside’ the syntactic structure” (Erman 2001: 1339).

Secondly, in Subsection 3.3 an attempt will be made to delineate the most important ‘identifiable’ functions of EFFs in discourse, especially those interactional functions elaborated by Kärkkäinen (2003), and which, in turn, will be later used for the determination of the functions in the empirical part of the study (cf. Subsection 6.4). In this Subsection it will also be explained why exactly these functions are addressed in this study and how they have been selected for the purposes of the current research. Since these functions are categorised according to their positions in the interactional turns, they are divided into the pre-positioned (Subsection 3.4), post-positioned (Subsection 3.5) EFFs, and those occurring as separate units (Subsection 3.6).

Thirdly, in Subsection 3.7 the variety of Kärkkäinen’s (2003) interactional functions will be complemented by the several communicative functions proposed by Kaltenböck (2010), viz. shield function (Subsection 3.7.1) and structural or filler function (Subsection 3.7.2). Finally, the last Subsection 3.8 presents a specific set of the functions of EFFs proposed in this study which will be referred to during the functional analysis of EFFs.

It should be noted that *interactional* (Kärkkäinen 2003) and *communicative* (Kaltenböck 2010) functions which have been referred to in the present thesis are quite similar notions. Despite different terminology, interactional and communicative functions have a lot in common, e.g. Kärkkäinen’s *starting-point* function for marking boundaries may also be interpreted as a structural function; or vs. Kaltenböck’s shield function may be seen as Kärkkäinen’s ‘recipient-oriented design of utterances’. The difference between the two “classes” of functions is that they have been proposed by different researchers, who had various approaches (e.g. Kärkkäinen (2003) highlights the importance of the interactive dynamic nature of stance-taking, whereas Kaltenböck (2010: 244) underlines the interaction of an EFF with its co-text, “which in turn gives rise to different pragmatic interpretations depending on the larger situational context”); and who emphasised different aspects of

discourse, thereby using slightly different parameters for the identification of the functions of EFFs, i.e. Kärkkäinen (2003: 170) determines very specific pragmatic functions of *I think* “according to the intonation unit encoding”, analysing in detail each contextual situation in which it occurs; whereas Kaltenböck (2010) identifies basic functions of *I think* by carrying out a detailed analysis of its formal co-textual realisation (i.e. prosodic realisation, position, scope), which allow “more specific pragmatic functions depending on the specificities and requirements of the situational context” (Kaltenböck (2010: 268). In my thesis I will focus, first of all, on those above-mentioned functions, the identification of which was possible using the corpus data extracted from COCA. Secondly, both interactional and communicative functions should complement each other and due to their similarities they can even overlap (cf. a specific set of the functions of EFFs in Subsection 3.8). Finally, paying attention to the minor differences of the functions suggested by Kärkkäinen (2003) and Kaltenböck (2010), I will differentiate between interactional and communicative functions and use therefore the ‘original’ terminology (i.e. ‘interactional’ and ‘communicative’ functions) (See Subsections 3.4-3.7 for a detailed description of these functions).

Section 4 provides an overview of the possible positions of EFFs, the types of the scope which EFFs may have, viz. clausal and phrasal scope, whereas the next Section (5) presents the source data used for the analysis of EFFs and demonstrates the methodology applied in this research. It is subdivided into four Subsections: Subsection 5.1 describes the corpus and the data elicited from it (Subsection 5.1.1 and Subsection 5.1.2) and presents the procedure of the delimitation of the set of EFFs (Subsection 5.1.3); Subsection 5.2 discusses the methods of investigating the EFFs selected for the current study; and Subsection 5.3 deals with the coding schema elaborated and used for this thesis, including such parameters/features as positions (Subsection 5.3.1), syntactic positions, i.e. points of insertion (Subsection 5.3.2), semantic-pragmatic scope of EFFs (Subsection 5.3.3), preceding linguistic units/collocations (Subsection 5.3.4), as well as their occurrence in interrogative clauses and with certain adverbials (additional codings) (Subsection 5.3.5). The last Subsection in Section 5 overviews the exclusions and limitations of this study (Subsection 5.4).

The remainder of the thesis is focused on the presentation and explanation of the results of the analysis of the formulaic features of EFFs and how they are reflected in terms of their use and functions in American English conversational discourse (Section 6). It is divided into seven Subsections that demonstrate various results of the investigation of EFFs, i.e. revealing different formulaic features in the use and functions of EFFs. Subsections 6.1-6.3 are devoted to the formal characteristics of EFFs (e.g. distributional differences, their

positions and scope, points of insertion), whereas Subsections 6.4-6.5 demonstrate the functional features of EFFs, more precisely, the interactional functions which pre-positioned/turn-initial (Subsection 6.4.1), post-positioned/turn-final (Subsection 6.4.2) EFFs perform in discourse; as well as the communicative functions of EFFs, namely shield function (Subsection 6.5.1), structural/filler function (Subsection 6.5.2), and the additional approximator function (Subsection 6.5.3) of EFFs which they fulfil in conversations. Lastly, Subsection 6.6 and Subsection 6.7 are focused on the presentation the preceding linguistic elements of EFFs and their occurrence in declarative clauses, respectively. All the results presented in Section 6 are supported with illustrative examples taken from the given corpus data.

The final Section summarises the research according to the results of the analysis of the four selected EFFs, drawing a conclusion about the formulaic features of EFFs, how EFFs are used by American English speakers, and what functions they perform in the American English conversational discourse.

2. What are epistemic formulaic fragments?

The primary aim of this Section is to explain and define the formulaic phrases under investigation – EFFs. In addition, an attempt will be made to describe the perspective from which the given formulaic expressions will be explored and analysed. That is why this Section is structured as follows. Subsection 2.1 is an overview of the various definitions and terms of EFFs which have been reported so far in the literature. As a result of this discussion and the adoption of certain existing frameworks of research into EFFs (or similar/comparable phrases) a working definition will be formulated in this Subsection as well. Subsection 2.2 considers the employment of a *formulaic language* lens in the analysis of EFFs in the current study. It gives an overview of the diverse terminology of formulaic language, main research areas and studies of formulaic language and discusses the reasons for the exclusion of the three central functions of formulaic language (Wray & Perkins 2000: 13-14). Moreover, Subsection 2.2 is divided into several Sub-subsections, which are devoted to the features that characterise the formulaic use of EFFs, viz. their frequency (Subsection 2.2.1), fixedness/invariability (Subsection 2.2.2), positional mobility/order of the host clause (Subsection 2.2.3), the shift from their propositional/concrete/compositional meaning to their pragmatic/abstract/non-compositional one) (Subsection 2.2.4), as well as their structure, form and length (Subsection 2.2.5). The presentation of the above features is highly important for the further analysis of the four selected EFFs, since their exploration in the corpus data will

not only reveal in which way are EFFs formulaic, but also help find the solution of the research question raised in this thesis, i.e. how these formulaic features of EFFs are reflected in terms of their use and functions in the American English conversational discourse.

2.1. Definitions and terminological differences of epistemic formulaic fragments

This Subsection presents the many ways of how to define EFFs. Due to the multifaceted nature of formulaic language and no less complex properties of discourse, together with the relative novelty of Thompson's (2002) term 'EFFs', there exists no generally accepted and precisely defined definition of an EFF as such. Hence, the primary aim of this Subsection is to develop an appropriate working definition of EFFs.

The first mention of EFFs-related terminology may be found in Urmson's (1952) study devoted to the verbs of cognition ('parenthetical verbs'), where the tendency of using these verbs in the present tense combined with the first person pronouns has been well documented. While contrasting these combinations (e.g. *I know*) with their comparable adverb equivalents such as *probably*, Urmson points out that the latter ones "have a greater degree of "impersonality"" (Urmson 1952: 487, in Brinton 2008: 220). Moreover, the researcher equates the 'parenthetical verbs', which are apparently more 'personal', with pragmatic markers that are oriented at the interlocutor's appropriate understanding of the articulated thought in "social, logical, or evidential" context (Urmson 1952: 495, in Brinton 2008: 220). This convincing comparison of EFFs with their pragmatic 'counterparts' has been also approved by other contemporary researchers. For example, Wichmann (2001: 183) juxtaposes EFFs with sentence adverbials and pragmatic markers. Andersen (2001: 39) includes EFFs into the category of pragmatic markers as 'pragmatic expressions' (e.g. *I mean*).

Importantly, the above ascription of the adverbial 'disposition' and pragmatic functions to EFFs validates Thompson's (2002: 144-145) argument for EFFs' "status as discourse marker *par excellence*" and their formulaic 'discourse marker' status, grounded on their 'autonomy' from the 'canonical' complement construction, as well as the formation of their "own prosodic phrase". Thompson & Mulac (1991: 326) have also pointed out this transformation of the epistemic phrases into completely independent units in the clause, within which they may take any position and 'behave' as other epistemic particles, such as *maybe*; or 'evidential particles' (cf. Chafe 1986, Aijmer 2002). It should be noted though that EFFs do not "relate to the proposition expressed" in a sense as adverbials are considered to do (Dehé & Wichmann 2010: 2), but express the speaker's epistemic, evidential, or evaluative stance with respect to the "issue or claim" discussed in the complement (Thompson 2002:

131), “to which they are providing testimony” (Thompson & Mulac 1991: 326), and by which they are ‘overridden’ so greatly that they have been re-interpreted as “epistemic parentheticals” (Thompson 2002: 134), i.e. epistemic adverbial phrases.

EEFs, composed of the first person singular subject and a mental verb, and characterized as “a recurring feature of conversational discourse” (Dehé & Wichmann 2010: 2), have previously been viewed as parentheticals, at least since the emergence of the notion ‘parenthetic clause’ (Jespersen 1937), otherwise known as ‘parenthetical adjunct’ (Corum 1975) or ‘parenthetical clause’ (Emonds 1973), or ‘parenthetical structure’ (O’Grady, Dobrovolsky & Katamba 1997), or ‘parenthesis’ (Urmson 1952, Nosek 1973), ‘reduced parentheticals’ (Schneider 2007), or just ‘parentheticals’ (e.g. Biber et al. 1999, Dehé & Kavalova 2007, 2010, Burton-Roberts 2005, etc.). The phrases under study have been reported to be able to function parenthetically (cf. Urmson 1956, Brinton 1996, Wierzbicka 2006) in order to “orient the hearer aright towards the statement with which they are associated” (Urmson 1952: 491, in Kaltenböck 2007: 27). Especially, the omission of *that* in EEFs points their “status as parentheticals” (Brinton 2008: 18; cf. Thompson 2002, Kärkkäinen 2003). In contrast, Givón (1993: 37) refers to EEFs as ‘seemingly parenthetic constructions’, regarding them as main clauses (cf. Quirk et al. 1972) that are followed by a complement clause. Besides, Peltola (1982: 102-103) defines EEFs as ‘parenthetic epistemic main clause’ (e.g. *I guess*) as one of the types of ‘comment clauses’ (Quirk et al. 1972) and stresses that depending on the position of the given phrases, namely in medial and final position, they may be used either parenthetically, or be loosely connected with the anchor clause. Other researchers tried to add some defining aspects to the category ‘parentheticals’, for instance, for Banfield (1982: 82) these are ‘discourse parentheticals’, and for Schourup (1999: 227) ‘parenthetical lexicalized clauses’ (e.g. *you know, I mean*), whereas for Kaltenböck et al. (2011), who refer to parentheticals as ‘theticals’ (based on the assertion that there are some categories which are not really “parenthetical in the sense that they are interpolated in or require an anchor utterance” Kaltenböck et al. 2011: 856), EEFs constitute a type of ‘constructional theticals’ taking the form of a comment clause. Clearly, the list of these terms highlighting the ‘parenthetical’ nature of EEFs is by no means complete. However, the focal point now will be on EEFs as *epistemic parentheticals*, which have already been mentioned above. Before moving on to the brief discussion of the epistemic aspect of ‘parenthetical-like’ EEFs, it is important to emphasize that Thompson (2002: 143) uses the term ‘parentheticals’ exclusively for a limited number of cases, namely “in a medial or final position with respect to its associated clause”, in which EEFs (CPT-phrases) best

demonstrate “their status as fragments”. Van Bogaert (2010: 400) also notes the inappropriateness of the term ‘parenthetical’ if referring to EFFs occurring initially, since it “appositely denotes medial and final uses”. It will be premature to speculate at this point about the potential limitation of EFFs functioning as parentheticals, thus a more detailed discussion will be provided during the corpus investigation.

Regarding all the above, Thompson & Mulac (1991) proposed to treat ‘epistemic parentheticals’ as ones that have developed from subject+verb+*that*-complement clauses by means of reanalysis of the main clause that had also led to a change of their meaning (Aijmer 2002: 17-18). According to Brinton (2008), EFFs constitute a subclass of clausal parentheticals, referred to as “other parenthetical items of a clausal nature” (Brinton 2008: 1), namely ‘epistemic/evidential parentheticals’ (Brinton 2008: 220) which belong to comment clauses. By the way, EFFs have also been termed as comment clauses without being distinguished as a separate class within this category (cf. Quirk et al. 1985, Biber et al. 1999 Conrad & Biber 2000, Kaltenböck 2009, 2013), although with a few minor exceptions, e.g. ‘stance-marking comment clauses’ (Wichmann 2001: 183). However, the recognition of EFFs as ‘epistemic parentheticals’ have been well acknowledged so far (e.g. Thompson & Mulac 1991, Wierzbicka 2006, Brinton 2008, Dehé & Wichmann 2010, etc.), even despite the fact that apart from their primary epistemic function, EFFs’ other functions, such as ‘tentative’ or ‘deliberative’ (cf. Aijmer 1997), have also been attributed to them. Since there is “no general agreement on the exact delimitation of parentheticals” (Kaltenböck 2007: 29), the discussion of all fine-grained differences between the subtypes, variety of parentheticals and other aspects of their analysis remains under the scope of this thesis.

After the demonstration of EFFs that are best viewed as epistemic parentheticals that are “free to float to various positions in the clause” (Thompson & Mulac 1991: 326) and that “have an epistemic relationship to the proposition they modify in that they limit its truth value” (Dehé & Wichmann 2010: 5), a concise presentation of EFFs as *discourse markers* is in order. Though it is now clear that as a result of grammaticalization, EFFs become fixed and are used as epistemic adverbs (cf. Thompson & Mulac 1991: 313; Campbell 2001), it is necessary to clarify what is meant by the afore-mentioned status of EFFs as a ‘discourse marker’ *par excellence* (Thompson 2002: 144). Aijmer (1997: 1) treats an EFF, e.g. *I think* as compared to *I think* with *that*-complementizer as a “speech-act adverbial”, i.e. discourse marker or a modal particle, but not as a clause (cf. Thompson & Mulac 1991). This attests to both the formulaic and grammaticalized features of EFFs. Apparently, based on the view that EFFs are quite fixed grammaticalized units functioning as “text-oriented markers which are

used as indicators of various kinds of transitions in discourse” (Erman & Warren 2000: 43), “involving the speaker’s relationship to the hearer, to the utterance or to the whole text” (Aijmer 2002: 2), they have also been included into the various classifications of *discourse markers* (Schiffrin 1987, Schourup 1985 [1982], Fraser 1988, 1990, Stenström 1994, Jucker & Ziv 1998, Lenk 1998), *discourse particles* (Hansen 1998, Aijmer 2002, Fischer 2000, 2006), or *pragmatic markers* (Brinton 1996), or *pragmatic particles* (Östman 1995). Also interesting in this regard is Kaltenböck’s (2005: 47-48) differentiation between clausal parentheticals and pragmatic markers (e.g. *really, actually*), whereby the latter are more “formulaic (fixed)” than the former. Nevertheless, as indicated by Brinton (2008: 18), the researcher excludes the well-known pragmatic marker *I think* from the class of pragmatic markers arguing for its flexibility potential; and at the same time, underlining “only minimal overlap” between these two classes, and thus, *I think, I mean, you know, mind you* and *listen* are still referred to both categories (cf. Kaltenböck 2008: 86, Kaltenböck 2007). In this light, EFFs seem to constitute a small ‘in-between’ set of clausal elements within larger categories of discourse/pragmatic markers, concomitantly functioning as mobile independent epistemic parentheticals. Some researchers have tried to overcome this fuzziness of the differentiation of epistemic adverbials from discourse markers. Dehé & Wichmann (2010: 2) have proposed to explain this distinction “in terms of occupying different places on a continuum from the propositional to the formulaic”, emphasizing that “this continuum is reflected in prosodic realisation”. Importantly, Thompson (2002: 144) provides evidence that EFFs form “their own prosodic phrase” which, in turn, substantiates her claim that EFFs are best interpreted in term of their ability to “float” as parentheticals and their formulaicity as discourse markers. Aijmer (1997: 24) is in accordance with this observation and notes that EFFs (e.g. parenthetical *I think*) tend to be presented as a “separate intonation group”. Moreover, Nespor & Vogel (1986: 188) proves that EFFs form intonation domains on their own. Overall, the complement-taking scheme means that EFFs are “embedded as part of a larger unit” (Tao 2003: 82), being either “prosodically integrated into a larger intonation domain” (cf. Stenström 1994, Wichmann 2011, Dehé & Wichmann 2010) or “separated from the rest of the clause by a syntactic phrase boundary” (Dehé & Wichmann 2010: 9).

The final important aspect of the EFFs concerns their *subjective* nature. If compared with adverbials, which have been reported to be widely used to convey epistemic or evidential stance (e.g. Conrad & Biber 2000, Downing 2002), EFFs are certainly an essential source of epistemic stance. Moreover, the consideration of the point given below puts EFFs into a broader perspective (Stubbs 1986: 1):

whenever speakers (or writers) say anything, they encode their point of view towards it: whether they think it is a reasonable thing to say, or might be found to be obvious, irrelevant, impolite, or whatever. The expression of such speakers' attitudes is pervasive in all uses of language

Regarding this ubiquity of every utterance that takes a stance, EFFs are undoubtedly more than any other utterances enact a stance, which consequently manifests their highly *subjective* nature in discourse. Therefore, EFFs have also been referred to as “subjective markers of epistemic stance” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 20). By subjectivity I mean “the expression of self and the representation of a speaker’s perspective or point of view in discourse – what has been called a speaker’s imprint” (Finegan 1995:1). Moreover, since the thesis follows Scheibman’s (2002: 15) perspective, whereby speakers use language subjectively, especially in interactive discourse, in order to present their point of view, rather than “unmediated descriptions of the world”, the importance of EFFs as ‘subjective marker[s] par excellence’ (Kärkkäinen 2007: 184) should also be stressed for the further exploration of the use of EFFs in discourse.

In addition, it should be mentioned that perhaps the most seemingly similar term used to define EFFs has been applied by Kärkkäinen (2007: 183), who explores *I guess* as ‘epistemic/evidential fragment’, characterised by a high frequency in American English. Following Du Bois’ (2007) framework, she argues that *I guess* is a subjective marker which “functions as an intersubjective stance frame that organizes the stance-taking activity between conversational co-participants in a surprisingly consistent fashion” (Kärkkäinen 2007: 184). Similar to Kärkkäinen (2007), who adopts Thompson’s (2002: 141) view of grammar as ‘reusable fragments’ “to be used as turns or parts of turns”, the current study will rely on this principle in order to explore the use and functions of the EFFs in turn constructions, “specifically in stancetaking activity between participants” (Kärkkäinen 2007: 189).

Taking into consideration the above discussion and highlighting the most distinct characteristics of EFFs based on the points of view of the authors cited, I would allow myself to gloss a working definition of EFFs as follows:

Epistemic formulaic fragments are highly frequent, relatively fixed conventionalised epistemic formulas with abstract meaning that perform a wide variety of different pragmatic functions in discourse, and which are used without that-complementiser, being ‘independent’ of their anchor/host clause, i.e. positionally mobile: they are able to precede, interrupt, or follow their associated clause.

In the following Subsection an attempt will be made to look at EFFs as defined above foregrounding their formulaic nature and referring to research that has emphasized these aspects.

2.2. Epistemic formulaic fragments through the lens of formulaicity/formulaic language

The purpose of this Subsection is to investigate the theoretical foundation behind the formulaic language research, since it will be used as a conceptual background in the thesis. In other words, a *formulaic language* lens will be employed for the analysis of EFFs in the current study. Using this approach means that the primary aim of the present investigation is to explore formulaic features, which may be traced in the use (e.g. fixedness and variability, frequency, the shift from compositional to non-compositional meaning, etc., cf. Subsections 2.2.1-2.2.5) and functions of EFFs in the American English conversations. But before moving on to the detailed analysis of EFFs, it is important, on the one hand, to delineate the most important milestones in the research into formulaic language that has been done so far, and, on the other hand, to describe the most significant development stages of this field of study, its main research areas and studies; and, at the same time, to highlight the divergence of the approaches to the phenomenon. Many researchers who carried out these studies were captivated by the multifaceted nature of formulaic language and interpreted it in many different ways which gave rise to a great variety of terms and definitions of formulaic expressions, which will also be summarised in this Subsection.

The nature of formulaic language is multifaceted – it “is not a homogeneous phenomena [sic], but rather quite varied” (Schmitt 2005: 14) that seems to be a highly popular and fast-growing research area. It is astounding that only several decades ago the investigation of formulaic language was almost on the verge of sinking into oblivion. As Coulmas (1981: 1) noted that in 1980s, except for “the anecdotal and individual studies of isolated cases”, research into formulaic expressions (‘prefabricated linguistic expressions’ in his terminology) was almost entirely disregarded. Despite the proposed taxonomy of the various categories of researchers who devoted their studies to particular aspects of formulaic language in the 1960s and earlier, within which eight research traditions were determined by Pawley (2007: 5-9) (e.g. literary scholars (e.g. formulae in the poems), anthropologists and folklorists (e.g. ritual speech and song), lexicographers, philosophers, sociologists, neurologists, grammarians (e.g. free and fixed expressions (Jespersen 1922 [2013])), etc.), I will focus on more distinct and recent aspects of the history of formulaic language.

Formulaic language as a field of applied linguistics has taken about forty years to develop into a ‘legitimate’ scientific field of study (Van Lancker Sidtis 2012: 343). First studies of formulaic language were mainly concerned with native language and first language acquisition (cf. Nelson 1981, Peters 1983), clinical language (cf. Hughlings 1866, 1874, Van Lancker Sidtis 1987) and second language learning (L2) (cf. Bahns, Burmeister & Vogel

1986, Schmidt 1983). These quite independent areas of investigation of formulaic language became the central focus of Alison Wray's research in the mid-1990s. Wray, a key figure in this research area, soon expanded its role and spectrum into a rapidly growing research field. The researcher's aims ranged from finding out the reasons why the use of formulaic language was so easy for children and so problematic for late L2 or adults, through investigating this phenomenon in language disorders, to discovering new perspectives of its implementation into a language learning class (Wray 2009b: 5-6). Moreover, relying on Weinert's (1995) review and Van Lacker's Sidtis (1987) neurolinguistic studies, Wray conducted numerous individual studies providing "an explanation of formulaic language that was coherent across these different strands" (Wray 2009b: 6). As a result, a descriptive model of language acquisition appeared (Wray & Perkins 2000, Wray 2002), according to which 'holistic processing' "plays a different role depending on the level of linguistic development" (Bozzone 2010: 35).

The introduction of this model has marked a turning point in the development of the research into formulaic language and opened new horizons for various studies, which have been mushrooming since then. Pawley (2007: 4) points out that the period between 1980s and 1990s is marked by the "expansion and strengthening" of research into different aspects of formulaic language. Some of these newly emerged areas of study are concerned with the nature of protolanguage and origin of language (cf. Wray 1998, Wray 2000b, Wray & Grace 2007), the processing and production of formulaic expressions (cf. Pawley & Syder 1983, Jiang & Nekrasova 2007, Schmitt & Underwood 2004, Tremblay et al. 2011, Okuwaki 2012), lexical 'collocations' (e.g. Sinclair 1991, McEnery et al. 2006), 'lexical bundles' in different genres, viz., spoken and written/academic registers (e.g. Conrad & Biber 2004, Biber & Barbieri 2007, Cortes 2002, 2004, Oakey 2002), in other languages (e.g. Korean, (Kim 2009), Russian (Grenoble 2004)), in historical legal texts (e.g. Kopaczyk 2012), in official EU texts (e.g. Jablonkai 2009), in English Lingua Franca (Kecskes 2007); as well as formulaic language in poetry (e.g. MacKenzie 2000). Furthermore, there exist studies dealing with pragmatic and/or/ functional (cf. Overstreet & Yule 2001, Kecskes 2010, Bladas 2012, Bardovi-Harlig 2012), or phonological aspects of formulaic expressions (Lin 2010, 2012), oral-formulaic performance (Kuiper 2000), studies which investigate the interrelation between formulaic language and creative language use and acquisition (cf. Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992, Wray 2002, Bell 2012), the potentials of combination of formulaic language and genre analysis (cf. Hüttner 2005); as well as studies that are focused on the definition/identification of the phenomenon (Wray 2002, Wray 2008a, 2009a, 2012), or studies that are concentrated

on explorations of language of social interaction, such as formulaic politeness expressions (cf. Terkourafi 2002), or conventionalized impoliteness formulae (cf. Culpeper 2010). There are also studies which are devoted to such research areas as formulaic language in first (L1) and second language (L2) acquisition (cf. Peters 1983, Weinert 1995, Wray 2000a, 2002, Ellis 2002, Schmitt 2004, Meunier & Granger 2008, Durrant 2008, Kecskes 2003); learning/teaching formulaic sequences (cf. Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992, Wray 2002, Lewis 2000, Wray & Fitzpatrick 2010, Alali & Schmitt 2012, Roever 2012); the importance of formulaic sequences for L2 fluency (cf. Wood 2002, 2006; Stengers, Boers & Housen 2011) and for English for academic purposes (cf. Hyland 2008, Simpson-Vlach & Ellis 2010), as well as textual aspects of formulaic expressions in learners' dictionaries (cf. Moon 1992, 2001). In addition, there are a lot of diverse corpus studies (e.g. Moon 1998, Altenberg 1998, Oakey 2002, Simpson 2004, Biber 2009), different historical-linguistic (cf. Corrigan et al. 2009), psycholinguistic (cf. Tremblay et al. 2011, Shaoul & Westbury 2011), neurolinguistic (cf. Van Lancker Sidtis 2012) studies, as well as research studies on language/neurological disorders, e.g. Alzheimer's disease (cf. Bridges & Van Lancker Sidtis 2010, Wray 2008b, 2011) and many others.

The above mentioned overview of the recent studies presents only a limited number of research studies of formulaic language, the purpose of which was to provide a generalized discussion of the main research directions of this field. It has also made it possible to demonstrate the originality of the approach adopted in the given study, since the investigation sets other goals and investigates formulaic expressions, the use and functions of which have not been yet explored from this perspective, i.e. this thesis puts into the spotlight the formulaic features of EFFs which are reflected in their use and functions in American English discourse.

A great number of the aforementioned numerous research works and the wide variety of approaches to formulaic language have led to the emergence of a myriad of terms used to describe this notion. The reasons for such a variety of the definitions of formulaic language are given in the next paragraphs.

First of all, this "terminological variation" depends on the perspective from which researchers viewed this phenomenon in the previous studies: 'inwards', thereby disregarding "the existence of the phenomenon beyond the bounds of the specific area under investigation" (Wray & Perkins 2000: 3), or 'outwards', thereby dealing with the notion from a wider point of view but underrating "some basic problems with the looseness of the terminology" (ibid.), which has resulted in a highly heterogeneous terminology.

Secondly, different characteristics and properties (i.e. form, function, semantic, syntax, lexis) of formulaic language, on which the emerging terms have been based, have also brought about the diversity of the terms and definitions of the phenomenon, and which again point to the multifarious and complex nature of formulaic language (Wray & Perkins 2000: 3). In their study on functions of formulaic language, Wray and Perkins (2000) list about forty terms which describe this phenomenon, its types or subtypes in different ways and to various extent (Wray & Perkins 2000: 3, Table 1). The number of these terms may be confusing, because various researchers have either named similar terms differently, or have taken different perspective (e.g. Firthian and ‘Eastern European’ traditions) (Oahey 2008: 30). As a result, there exist a large number of definitions of formulaic expressions.

Although Wray & Perkins (2000: 3) maintain that there is a disagreement among many researchers on the terminology of formulaic language, Wood (2002: 30) points out that there seems to be a consensus about basic definitions and clear distinctions of the properties of formulaic expressions. This agreement may be easily traced in the literature, where formulaic expressions are commonly defined as multi-word units of language stored holistically, and called *formulaic sequences* (Wray & Perkins 2000: 1):

a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other meaning elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar.

This generally accepted definition stresses that formulaic sequences are a result of a certain way of processing and storing language. Similarly, in Wood’s (2002: 31) view the fact that formulaic expressions are stored as a single lexical unit is of paramount importance for defining formulaic language. However, for Girard & Sionis (2003: 239) Wray’s definition “fails to fully grasp the nature and function of FS” (formulaic speech). In her later study Wray (2008) even introduces another term, *morpheme equivalent units* (MEU) (cf. ‘formulaic sequences’ Wray 2002: 9), and a new definition of it that “reflects specific claims about nature and, by implication, provenance of formulaic material in a language” (Wray 2008a: 12). This new definition emphasises likewise that the formulaic expressions (i.e. MEU) are “processed like a morpheme”, i.e. as a whole or as a single lexical unit, but adds that MEU may have “gaps for inserted variable items” (ibid.).

It should be noted that the holistic storage and processing of EFFs will not be explored in the current study, since the analysis and measurement of these parameters require special equipment and another type of investigation, but it will be assumed that EFFs are stored, retrieved and processed in the way as it has been argued in early studies, i.e. holistically. As

for the invariability or variability of the formulaic phrases under consideration, Subsection 2.2.2 will discuss this aspect of EFFs in more detail.

As it can be seen from the above discussion, formulaic expressions “seem to exist in so many forms that it is presently difficult to develop a comprehensive definition of the phenomenon” (Schmitt & Carter 2004: 2). Perhaps it is only possible to define some of the main approaches to formulaic language (Durrant & Mathews-Aydinli 2011: 59): ‘phraseological’ (cf. Cowie 1998), ‘frequently-based’ (cf. Stubbs 1995, Biber 2009) and ‘psychological’ approaches (cf. Wray 2002). Whereas the first one stresses the “non-compositionality” of formulaic expressions, and the second is concerned with their frequency and co-occurrence with other units, the third one emphasises the aforementioned holistic processing and storage of the formulaic expressions (ibid.). All these approaches overlap and provide evidence for each other, e.g. non-compositionality and frequency may point to holistic storage of the phrases under investigation (ibid.).

Interestingly, in her *Formulaic language and the lexicon* Wray (2002: 44-45) provides a long list of researchers who proposed different classifications of formulaic language (e.g. Aijmer 1996, Erman & Warren 2000, Lewis 1993, 1997, Moon 1992, 1997, etc.), stressing that these “can be geared towards theoretical or practical end, and occasionally both at once” (Wray 2002: 45). Moreover, she juxtaposes theoretically- with practically-driven taxonomies, exemplifying the most ‘attractive’ ones, such as by Becker (1975) or Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992). Apart from classifications of the approaches to the phenomenon and classifications of formulaic expressions, there are also numerous form- and function-based categorisations of them, a detailed discussion of which is outside the scope of the present study.

In addition, it should be noted that since this investigation analyses the functions of EFFs, it is important to mention the functions of formulaic expressions proposed by Wray (2002) and explain why these cannot be used for the functional analysis in this thesis. In their research study which is devoted to the functions of formulaic language and which presents an ‘integrated model’ that “explain[s] the basis of observed variation between the forms and functions” of formulaic expressions (Wray & Perkins 2000: 22), Wray & Perkins (2000: 13-14) suggest three central functions of social interaction that may be performed with the help of formulaic expressions, viz. those referring to “the speaker’s manipulation of his/her world” (e.g. commands, requests, politeness markers, etc.), “the expression of his/her individual identity” (e.g. story-telling, turn claimers, personal turns or phrases) and “asserting group identity” (e.g. groups chants, institutionalized forms of words, ritual, threats, hedges, etc.). These functions of formulaic expressions justify that “the formulaic material plays a central

role in maintaining the identity of the community” (Wray 2002: 92). However, their identification and description are problematic, because they are based on such factors, as “the overall knowledge of the language and/or stage of cognitive development” of the speaker/individual, “his/her purpose in speaking, including the intended effect on the hearer, the complexity and novelty of the idea, the interactional and discourse context, as well as competition from concomitant activities” (Wray & Perkins 2000: 22). As already mentioned, in this thesis I will use corpus data, which do not allow the determination of these factors, except for the analysis of the discourse context in which EFFs have been used by the American speakers. Thus, since it would be hardly possible to investigate and identify these functions of EFFs in my study due to the restricted array of research tools available for this investigation, having no possibility to carry out a psycholinguistic study and using corpus data, with the use of which it will be difficult to establish these functions, I will focus on the interactional and communicative functions of EFFs (See a detailed discussion in Section 3).

To sum up, this Subsection has demonstrated from which perspective the formulaic expressions under study (EFFs) will be investigated and viewed - *formulaic language*, i.e. a number of features of EFFs that characterise the formulaic use of EFFs will be analysed and explored in the American English conversations. It has been outlined how diverse terminology and definitions of formulaic language are, and what main research areas and approaches to the phenomenon exist, and what studies of formulaic language have been carried out so far. Moreover, in this Subsection I have discussed the reasons of the exclusion of the three central functions of formulaic language (Wray & Perkins 2000: 13-14), since their identification is problematic and not possible with the corpus data extracted from COCA. Overall, the abundance of terms and definitions used in research into formulaic language reflects the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon and shows that using this formulaic language perspective will not be easy, which makes the analysis of the formulaic characteristics of EFFs in this study even more challenging. In order to better understand these features which characterise the formulaic use of EFFs, following Subsections (2.2.1-2.2.5) will overview them in more detail.

2.2.1. Frequency

This Sub-subsection is aimed at presenting one of the most distinct formulaic features of EFFs – their high *frequency*. In addition, an attempt will be made to find out whether frequency is a defining factor for the formulaic expressions under consideration.

The influence of frequency on formulaicity and the resulting emergence of formulaic expressions have often been disputed by different linguists. However, there is still a considerable disagreement on this point. Some researchers argue that frequency is a determining criterion for the holistic storage and processing of formulaic language or “for calling a string ‘formulaic’” (Wray 2002: 25) and therefore, is of primary importance. Others suggest that frequency is not *the* determining factor since there are other factors on which formulaicity depend. These different views will be shortly overviewed in the next paragraphs.

The question whether formulaic language, its emergence and storage depend on the frequency is highly controversial, but most linguists seem to share this view. The proponents of this idea argue that formulaic expressions “appear more frequently than expected by chance” (Hyland 2008: 4) and that frequency does not only play an important role in determining the process of memorizing and holistic processing of formulaic language, but also may influence the storage of language units in general, “depending on the frequency of use” (Bozzone (2010: 35). Similarly, Van Bogaert (2010: 420) considers frequency as “the most influential factor in a linguistic pattern’s entrenchment”. Furthermore, psycholinguistic research concerned with the storage and processing of the basic language units provides comparably strong and irrefutable evidence for frequency-dependent formulaicity. Several studies, for example by Sereno & Jongman (1997), Alegre & Gordon (1999), prove that lexical storage is conditioned by the frequent use of language, and is in accord with the ‘Usage-based model’ (Bybee 1985). However, not only the frequent use of linguistic units is essential for an easier storage process in the lexicon, but also the frequency of the co-occurrence, which means that “the more often two elements occur in sequence the tighter will be their constituent structure” (Bybee & Scheibman 1999: 577). Sosa & MacFarlane (2002: 227) argue that it is a “collocational frequency” which determines the constituency of the structure when its elements are used together frequently in common conversations, and thus, “may be stored in the mental lexicon and accessed holistically” (ibid.). These and many other findings from the field of linguistics and psycholinguistics confirm the above-mentioned ‘usage-based model’ according to which “lexical representation and the internal structure of the lexicon are determined by actual language use” (Sosa & MacFarlane 2002: 235). Taking into account that Bybee’s (1985) frequency-based model contradicts rule-based models, such as Pinker’s (1991) ‘Dual-Processing model’, it is still a highly significant theoretical basis while talking about frequency as a determining factor of formulaicity. In addition, while defining ‘formulaic theticals’, Kaltenböck et al. (2011) emphasize that often they are “prosodically integrated into the anchor utterance as a result of frequent use” (Kaltenböck et

al. 2011: 859, cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 173). Also Thompson & Mulac (1991: 326) have demonstrated that the reanalysis of EFFs ('epistemic parenthetical expressions') took place due to frequency and have emphasised the "intimate relationship between discourse frequency patterns and the emergence of grammar".

Despite convincing evidence for formulaic language which depends on frequency in the above studies, frequency is not always regarded as a determining factor of formulaicity, especially in corpus linguistic studies (Wray & Perkins 2000: 10). Furthermore, for Wray (2002: 25) there is certainly "some kind of relationship between frequency and formulaicity", but which, does not mean that "the most frequent associations are the most formulaic" (ibid.). In other words, the emergence, processing and storage of formulaic language should not solely be explained by the frequent use of certain co-occurring linguistic units, and may be regarded as *one* of the other (not less important) defining factors, e.g. "schematization" (Langacker 1991), "pragmatic strengthening" (Traugott 1989), "a natural tendency to economy of effort" and "the recurrence of similar situations" (Sinclair 1991: 110), "subjectification" (Traugott & Dasher 2002) and its further grammaticalization (Bladas 2012: 929); etc. Apparently, all these factors may help describe the phenomenon under study, "but are not the only possible way to view" formulaic expressions (Schmitt & Carter 2004: 2).

As for the formulaic phrases under study, i.e. EFFs, they are reported to be "retrieved from memory as wholes, are not an infrequent phenomenon" (Erman 2001: 1353). Scheibman (2002: 66-67) detects 86 per cent of the first present-tense forms are formulaic expressions (e.g. *I think, I guess*). The most frequent EFF – *I think* – has been explored from a variety of viewpoints, which are outside the scope of the present study. But it should be noted that its extremely high frequency cannot even be compared with other European languages (Goddard & Karlsson 2003: 5), which shows how strikingly unique the phenomenon of English EFFs is.

EFFs are formulaic because of their routine usage and because such "formulas are recurrent sequences" (Ellis 2012: 27). Thompson (2002: 140) also concludes that "this tendency for the epistemic phrases [i.e. EFFs] to be the ones which reduce to formulas is of course based on their frequency". Apparently, in the course of time EFFs have been used by the speakers so frequently that they have therefore become "highly routinized and regular" (Kärkkäinen 2003: 51, cf. Scheibman 2002: 73, Pichler 2009: 561) 'conventionalized pragmatic expressions' (Scheibman 2002: 32). The frequent use of EFFs seemingly accounts for their formulaicity, especially if taking into account the linkage of the word *formulaic* with the notions of 'unity', 'custom' or 'habit' (Wray 2002: 9). For this reason, EFFs have also been qualified as "a recurring feature of conversational discourse" (Dehé & Wichmann 2010:

2). For Coulmas (1981: 3-4) EFFs ('routine formulae' in his terminology) are "highly conventionalized pre-patterned routine in *conversation*". Ostensibly, EFFs have emerged as a consequence of their frequent use which resulted in further conventionalisation, and concomitantly leading to a higher degree of their fixedness, which will be discussed in the next Sub-subsection.

Taking the above discussion into consideration, it can be concluded that there is certainly a close link between frequency and formulaicity, though "opinions differ as to the precise relationship between" them (Wray 2008a: 3).

A full discussion of this issue and the importance of the frequency as a determining factor for formulaicity as a subject of a wide-ranging debate is beyond the scope of this paper and requires a more detailed research. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, in this thesis frequency will be regarded as one of the predominant features that characterise of EFFs as formulaic phrases.

2.2.2. Fixedness and variability

This Sub-subsection deals with "two key characteristics of formulaic language" (Schmitt 2005: 13) – *fixedness* and *variability*.

As already touched upon in the previous Sub-subsection, as a result of their frequent use, EFFs have become "relatively fixed epistemic formulas" (Thompson 2002: 139). Fixedness of formulaic expressions (i.e. EFFs) "is a particularly difficult feature to grasp" (Bladas 2012: 932). The reason for the problematic identification of this formulaic feature lies, first of all, in the fact that the lexical form of a particular EFF may be "compared only to hypothetically suitable lexical forms" (Bladas 2012: 932). Secondly, since the majority of EFFs may be modified to some degree (ibid.), i.e. "only a small subset of [them] are entirely fixed" (Wray 2002: 34), it is difficult to differentiate between 'possibly' variable or completely fixed formulaic expressions. Therefore, "it is essential to see the categories as forming a continuum from the most free combinations to the most fixed idioms, rather than discrete classes" (Howarth 1998: 35).

EFFs tend to demonstrate different degrees of fixedness and variability within this continuum. For instance, Bayer (1973) is of the opinion that EFFs may become more or less "stereotyped or formulaic", depending on the context and situation (Bayer 1973: 110, in Schneider 2007: 20). Similarly, Biber et al. (1999: 197) point out that there are some EFFs ('comment clauses' in their terminology) that are "more formulaic" and, at the same time, there are other EFFs that allow more variations. This view is also in accordance with Bolinger

(1989: 130) who emphasises that EFFs may be fixed to various degrees. In fact, “[t]he degree and type of variation depends on which kind of formulaic language is being addressed: idiom, variable expression, or lexical bundle” (Schmitt 2005: 13). Idioms that are regarded fixed may demonstrate “the greatest amount of variation, while variable expressions and lexical bundles seem to contain much more stable fixed cores” (ibid.). In other words, even seemingly fixed EFFs “allow for a surprising amount of flexibility” (Schmitt 2005: 18).

Interesting in this respect is a study by Erman & Warren (2000: 32), where they call EFF-like phrases ‘pragmatic prefabs’ which enjoy a specific ‘prefab status’ – *restricted exchangeability*, which means that “at least one member of the prefab cannot be replaced by a synonymous item without causing a change of meaning or function and/or idiomaticity.” This limited replaceability of the constituents of pragmatic prefabs (and obviously also EFFs) may even restrict the syntactic variability of these phrases, for example, the impossibility of the ‘pragmatic epistemological prefab’ *I guess* to take a negative form *I don’t guess* (Erman & Warren 2000: 32). Similarly, Kaltenböck (2007: 47) asserts that no variations are possible in classical discourse markers (e.g. *I mean, you know*) (cf. Kaltenböck 2005, 2008). These syntactic limitations of some EFFs notwithstanding, Kaltenböck (2007: 47) maintains that ‘parenthetical’ (i.e. EFF) *I think* is only “relatively fixed”, because it may be used in other forms (e.g. *I don’t think, I thought, I certainly/just think, I would/should think*).

Lastly, it should be stated that the degree of fixedness or variability of EFFs will not be explored in the current study, because the analysed formulaic expressions are limited in number and have been extracted in the particular form chosen for the study, viz. affirmative forms of EFFs without any syntactic and lexical variations. Moreover, as noted by Wray (2002: 34) “the fixedness criterion does not sit well with the existence of semi-fixed sequences, which contain slots for a variety of compulsory and optional material to be inserted”.

2.2.3. Positional mobility/order of the host construction and EFFs

This Sub-subsection presents another very important and distinct formulaic feature of formulaic expressions (i.e. EFFs) – their positional mobility.

It has been proved that EFFs are “free to float to various positions in the clause” (Thompson & Mulac 1991: 326). The recognition of this ability of EFFs (and other similar formulaic phrases) to be syntactically independent from the associated host clause have been widely accepted and often observed by many linguistics who have carried out research in this field (e.g. Thompson 2002, Aijmer 2002, Diessel & Tomasello 2001, Kärkkäinen 2003,

Kaltenböck 2010, etc.). Similarly, formulaic expressions such as EFFs have been reported to be able to function ‘parenthetically’ (cf. Urmson 1956, Brinton 1996, Wierzbicka 2006), i.e. they may “precede, interrupt, or follow their associated utterances” (Thompson 2002: 143). In other words, EFFs are “highly flexible” (Kaltenböck 2010: 244) within the utterance they go with, and with which they are “neither formally nor conceptually” (Diessel & Tomasello 2001: 108), but only “semantically pragmatically” (Kaltenböck 2010: 243) linked. Therefore, they are sometimes referred to as ‘floated parentheticals’ (Thompson 2002: 144). In addition, for Diessel & Tomasello (2001: 107) one of the features that characterise the formulaic use is the variability of the order of EFFs and their host construction, i.e. EFFs “may precede or follow [...] or may even be inserted into it” (cf. Hooper 1975, Thompson and Mulac 1991).

The abovementioned order of EFFs and their host construction will be scrutinised in the present thesis to find out whether EFFs are “in principle freely transportable to positions other than clause-initial position” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 40), and how loosely are EFFs connected syntactically to the host construction. The exact procedure of the analysis of the positional mobility of EFFs, namely their positional patterns within the associated clause (viz. initial, medial or final) and their exact syntactic positions (i.e. points of insertion), will be discussed in Subsection 4, the results of which will be presented in Subsection 5.3. Overall, the exploration of this formulaic feature is crucial since it will demonstrate how it is reflected not only in the use, but also in the functions of EFFs in conversational discourse.

2.2.4. The shift from propositional concrete/compositional to pragmatic abstract /non-compositional meaning

The aim of this Sub-subsection is to outline another formulaic feature which characterises EFFs – their pragmatic abstract non-compositional *meaning*. More precisely, it discusses the shift from concrete semantic compositional meaning (‘of cogitation’) to “new” abstract pragmatic non-compositional meaning of EFFs as a result of grammaticalisation and other processes of their development which will be discussed below.

As proposed by Thompson & Mulac (1991), EFFs (and other similar formulaic expressions) are best viewed as ‘epistemic parentheticals’ which have developed from subject+cognitive verb+*that*-complement clauses due to reanalysis of the main clause that, in turn, has led to the change of their meaning (Aijmer 2002: 17-18). EFFs as “grammaticalized forms of subjects and verbs introducing complement clauses” (Thompson & Mulac: 1991: 326) seem to have lost their ‘initial’ literal meaning of opinion, thought, belief or knowledge. In fact, EFFs (‘pragmatic markers’ in researcher’s terminology) “have little or no meaning in

themselves and can only be understood either through clues in the context and/or situation, or else by having a conventionalized pragmatic meaning mapped onto them” (Erman 2001: 1339, cf. ‘speaker cogitation of *I think*’, Kaltenböck 2010: 264). This pragmatic abstract meaning of EFFs has “a complex meaning structure that reaches beyond the usual lexical meanings” (Van Lancker Sidtis 2012: 344).

Apart from the abovementioned grammaticalisation which has brought about the change of the meaning (a more detailed discussion of grammaticalisation is out the scope of this thesis), there are also other reasons for the shift of the meaning of formulaic expressions such as EFFs. One of them lies in the fact that they are “exclusively functional in that they do not directly partake in the propositional content of the utterance in question, but occur ‘outside’ the syntactic structure” (Erman 2001: 1339). Another explanation of the change of the meaning of EFFs from propositional to pragmatic is the ‘routine usage’ of EFFs, which, in turn, due to the fact that “frequency of occurrence and meaningfulness are inversely related” (Coulmas 1981:4) resulted in the change of their meaning. Overall, all these developments and circumstances have led to the change from propositional to “propositionally empty” (Diessel & Tomasello 2001: 108) meaning of EFFs. EFFs have changed their initial concrete meaning into new abstract non-compositional meaning which has consequently resulted in their new pragmatic functions in discourse. In addition, it should be noted that though the functions of EFFs will be analysed in this thesis, there is no possibility to trace or examine the change of the meanings of EFFs and observe how these are reflected in their use or functions. Therefore, in the current study I will rely on the findings of the previous research, according to which the above discussed reasons (e.g. grammaticalisation, frequent use, functional use, etc.) have led to the change of the meaning of EFFs, viz. from propositional concrete (semantic/literal) compositional to pragmatic abstract non-compositional meaning (cf. ‘Monosemous account of the functions of parenthetical *I think*’ Kaltenböck 2010: 264-265, which shows the “link between the underlying semantic meaning of *I think* and its various pragmatic meanings in actual use”).

2.2.5. Structure, form and length

This Sub-subsection deals with such formulaic features of formulaic expressions under study as their structure, form and length.

The essential formulaic features which distinguish EFFs from non-formulaic expressions are certainly their formal characteristics, such as structure, form and length. According to Diessel & Tomasello (2001: 107), due to the fact that any EFF is “non-

embedded (both formally and conceptually) it does not include a *that*-complementizer”. As discussed later in the present study, this criterion will be crucial for the delimitation process of the four selected EFFs (cf. Subsection 5.1.3). This procedure is not only necessary to meet the needs of the current investigation and narrow down the great number of existing EFFs to only four, but also shows how this feature is reflected in terms of the use of EFF: the most of the extracted CTP-phrases without *that*-complementiser (EFFs) are used in up to 80 per cent of all instances (with and without *that*-complementiser), which means that the investigated EFFs are already predominantly used with zero-complementiser, and thus this formulaic feature is well reflected in terms of their use. In addition, the fact that EFFs are used “readily without *that*” manifests them as ‘formulaic fragments’ (i.e. formulaic expressions) (Rodríguez Louro & Harris forthc.: 12).

The form of EFFs, as a distinct formulaic feature of their formulaic use, is characterised by their ‘internal construction’ (i.e. structure), namely, in the forms of their components – subject and complement-taking verb/predicate (verb of cognition) (cf. linguistic structure of complement-taking predicates in Boye & Harder 2007). The predicate “itself occurs in the present indicative active” (Diessel & Tomasello 2001: 108), whereas the subject is “either not overtly expressed or it is a [first][sic]- or second-person pronoun” (ibid.). However, as for the second component of EFFs, Diessel & Tomasello (2001: 108) maintain that it can also pertain to performative use. For this reason and due to the limitations of the study, the present investigation is restricted to the first person pronouns which build EFFs-phrases together with verbs of cognition. As a result, no negative forms of EFFs or forms with second-person pronoun have been included for the analysis in this thesis.

The last formulaic feature is the length of formulaic expressions, more precisely, their (i.e. and that of EFFs) concise form. As pointed out by Diessel & Tomasello (2001: 106), EFFs “are always short and formulaic (suggesting that they are stored as holistic expressions)”. Moreover, the associated clause of EFFs tends to be “much longer and more diverse” (ibid.). Taking this into account, it may be stated that the length of EFFs also seem to point to their formulaicity, i.e. reflect their formulaic characteristics. This will be later evident from the results of the analysis and even during the delimitation process of EFFs.

Overall, in the present thesis EFFs will be treated as predominantly short formulaic expressions with a fixed grammatical structure (i.e. first person pronoun+cognitive verb) which are followed by zero-complementiser and which are independent from their associated utterance.

3. Functions of epistemic formulaic fragments

As already mentioned in the previous Sections, a special emphasis in the present thesis is put on formulaicity of EFFs, i.e. on the formulaic features which characterise EFFs, e.g. their frequency, positional mobility, non-compositionality/fixedness, special form/structure. However, not only these formal features are formulaic characteristics of EFFs, but also their “new” pragmatic functional properties should be seen as their formulaic characteristics, which may be traced in their numerous functions which they perform in conversational discourse. That is why, this Section is devoted to the discussion of the functions of EFFs which have emerged due to the different development processes (e.g. grammaticalisation, frequent use, etc), which, in turn, have led to the change of the initial concrete compositional meaning of EFFs into their abstract pragmatic non-compositional meaning, which has consequently resulted in their new pragmatic functions in discourse.

It should be noted that since EFFs demonstrate “a strong affinity to discourse markers” (Kaltenböck 2010: 243) and are therefore included in the classifications of discourse /pragmatic markers, EFFs will be regarded as formulaic phrases which have “a specific grammatical structure with a regular pragmatic function” (Overstreet & Yule 2001: 47).

The main goal of this Subsection is to present a specific set of the functions of EFFs selected for this study, which will be referred to in order to identify them in the corpus data. Overall, the demonstration of the multifunctionality of EFFs, the presentation of the interactional and other communicative functions of EFFs, as well as providing the reader with the delimited set of EFFs, created for further empirical analysis, are the primary tasks of this Section.

3.1. Multifunctional nature of epistemic formulaic fragments

This Subsection deals with the multifaceted nature of the functions of EFFs in conversational discourse. Since researchers have identified various functions and have highlighted different aspects of the multifunctionality of EFFs, it gives an overview on these viewpoints, concomitantly stressing the importance of these phrases for communication.

Given that “communication is discourse; [...] a joint, collaborative endeavour in which participants cooperate to achieve particular goals in context” (Fetzer 2011: 256), it is obvious that the speakers use EFFs with the aim of meeting certain communicative needs in a particular conversational situation. The speakers’ main goal is to accommodate this use of EFFs in different repeating situations to the functions associated with them. Such “recurring situations in the social world require certain responses from people” that are usually referred

to as ‘*functions*’ (Schmitt & Carter 2004: 8). The possible reasons of the emergence of these new functions of EFFs are beyond the scope of the present study. But it should be stressed that not only the recurrence of EFFs, but also their concurrently developing formulaic structure and their frequent use in particular situations have contributed significantly to the increase of the variety of the functions they fulfil in conversation. As a result, EFFs have also been referred to as ‘conversational routines’ (Kecskes 2010: 2892), as “conversational formula of English, with distinct semantic and pragmatic functions” (Goddard & Karlsson 2003: 5, cf. Aijmer 1997, Thompson & Mulac 1991, Scheibman 2001, etc.), or as frequently used phrases which “signal[] important communicative functions” (O’Keefe et al. 2007: 33–34).

It is also widely accepted that owing to their formulaic nature, EFFs play an essential role for communication in general, because they “constitute standardized links between what people actually say and what sort of communicative functions their utterances serve to perform” (Coulmas 1981: 6-7). Therefore, as pointed out by Goddard & Karlsson (2003: 5), EFFs (e.g. *I think*) tend to perform various “conventionalised conversational functions”. Taking into consideration the emphasis on the formulaicity of EFFs in this thesis, it may be stated that similar to formulaic constructions, EFFs are phrases with a fixed grammatical structure (i.e. first person pronoun+cognitive verbs), which serves as “a basic pattern conventionally associated with a particular pragmatic function” (Overstreet & Yule 2001: 47).

It should be noted that the abovementioned pragmatic communicative function, for which a particular EFF has become “specialized” or is often associated with, potentially “predominates over or replaces the literal referential meaning” of EFFs (Aijmer, 1996:11), which is “crucial to the interaction mediated by speech” (Wierzbicka 1991: 341). However, it does not mean that EFFs “cannot have a core or basic meaning” (Müller 2005: 25), and even in case they do, they perform a variety of additional functions. In fact, EFFs (pragmatic markers) “have a number of different functions depending on the context” (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberg 2011: 229). EFFs are also reported to “fulfil more than one function or at least have sub-functions” (Müller 2005: 8). The multifaceted way in which EFF may function poses some problems for their determination and identification, as well as the clear differentiation between their meanings (different from the original ones). Seemingly, it is the newly emerged multiple functions and meanings of EFFs and the overlapping “with other markers in some of their meanings” that make the description of the multifunctionality of these phrases particularly “challenging” (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberg 2011: 229). Moreover, there exist some “discrepancies between meaning and function” of EFFs that are

quite frequent and which represent not unusual phenomena in conversations (Coulmas 1981: 7; cf. propositional content and illocutionary force of an utterance, Searle 1975). Due to these ‘meaning-function’ differences, the analysis of the functional properties of EFFs becomes even more difficult. Apart from the diverse functions and additionally attributed meanings of EFFs, the constituents of EFFs themselves have a wide and varied range of ‘multiple’ features as well, especially the verbs of cognition (i.e. the second constituent). They “are assigned the status of multifunctional devices expressing different types and different degrees of commitment” (Fetzer 2008: 384). As for their first constituent, viz. first person pronoun, it “indexes the speaker’s awareness of normative expectations and contributes to these expectations’ frequent pragmatic functions in conversations” (Scheibman 2009: 634). Both constituents vary in the purposes they serve in discourse, and thus additionally complicate the task of identifying and differentiating between the numerous functions of EFFs in conversations.

In the light of the above, it may be summed up that EFFs perform a large number of essential functions in discourse. This multifunctionality of EFFs, however, makes the determination of their functions quite problematic and thus requires the consideration and theoretical knowledge of the functions of EFFs which have been suggested by researchers so far. Some of the functions are worth mentioning and will be therefore overviewed in the following paragraphs.

Perhaps the most ‘popular’ functions of EFFs have been proposed by Holmes (1984: 359, cf. Holmes 1990: 187), viz. tentative and deliberative ones (cf. Aijmer 1997), which reveal the degrees of certainty of the speaker. These functions are based on the Hooper’s (1975) suggestion that the second constituents of EFFs (e.g. *believe*, *suppose*) represent ‘the subclass of weak assertives’, because they “do not make an assertion independent of complement assertion”, which is additionally “only weakly asserted” (Hooper 1975: 101, in Simon-Vandenberg 2000: 42-43). However, since the identification of both functions implies the distinction between prosodic patterns and syntactic positions of EFFs (apart from relationship between the speakers, formality, etc.), and, since the current study is limited to the corpus data which do not offer the analysis of prosodic contours of EFFs, neither tentative nor deliberative uses of EFFs will be taken into consideration. As a result, they will be not included in the set of the functions elaborated for the empirical part of my research (cf. Subsection 3.8). Moreover, due to the complexity of their meanings, EFFs “cannot simply be labelled ‘uncertainty’ or ‘lack of commitment’”, because one should take into account not only “the extralinguistic situation and the cultural meaning of the genre”, but also the status of

the speakers, etc. (Simon-Vandenberg 2000: 41). Again, the consideration of these functions would not be possible in my study, since it would require a very detailed examination of the social factors, the dependence on which influenced the content of the utterances produced by the speakers in my corpus data, which are not easily determinable, if at all. Besides, apart from expressing the speaker's certainty or uncertainty with regard to the proposition, EFFs may have "affective, addressee-oriented meaning, especially in informal interactions" (Stubbe & Holmes 1995: 64), which would make the distinction between the two functions under question (actually the aforementioned meanings) even more difficult.

Several researchers have identified 'textual' (Mindt 2003) or discourse-organizing' functions (Aijmer, 1997) of EFFs. For Erman (2001: 1339), EFFs perform the function "of monitoring discourse and conversation in various ways". Such uses of EFFs help the speakers order the structure of the discourse and position utterances or refer to the previously mentioned issues. This study will also underline the importance of such functions of EFFs in conversational discourse (cf. structural or filler function, Kaltenböck 2010), since there is a tendency of EFFs to serve not "as epistemic comment but [to] function[] as a textual device for linking purposes and the structuring of information flow" (Kaltenböck 2010: 257).

Other research studies have demonstrated that certain formulas (i.e. formulaic expressions) perform 'metapragmatic functions', "providing language users with a means of commenting on and influencing the interpretation of the pragmatic impact of what they are saying or writing" (Overstreet & Yule 2002: 786, cf. Mey 1993). Apparently, this metapragmatics can also be attributed to EFFs, especially if they are regarded as comment clauses in their parenthetical use. However, the use of EFFs for 'commenting' as such is not limited in its variety. Östman (1982: 152) claims that discourse markers (i.e. EFFs) are used to "implicitly anchor the act of communication to the speaker's attitude towards aspects of the on-going interaction". To put it simply, EFFs are used not only to comment on what is being said, but also indicate the speaker's personal attitude and his or her own position on the subject or situation. Furthermore, EFFs may be used for the modification of the speaker's own ideas and intentions (Schiffrin 1987: 267). In addition, taking a thetical grammar perspective and defining the functions of 'theticals', namely the one concerned with '*attitudes of the speaker*', Kaltenböck et al. (2011: 866) points out that EFFs may fulfil the function of "offering evaluations, modal assessments, opinions, etc." That is, EFFs may be characterised by a large number of communicative functions, above all those of commenting on and expressing personal attitudes towards the proposition.

Since EFFs are “exclusively functional in that they do not directly partake in the propositional content of the utterance in question, but occur ‘outside’ the syntactic structure” (Erman 2001: 1339), they are often referred to as “conventionalized parenthetical construction” (Fetzer 2011: 257). This means, that EFFs are independent items which function as “epistemic adverbs with respect to a single clause, rather than as a full complement-taking verb” (Goddard & Karlsson 2003: 5). For Diessel & Tomasello (2001: 97-98) EFFs are “some sort of clausal operator guiding the hearer's interpretation of the associated (complement) clause: they serve as epistemic markers, attention getters, or markers of the illocutionary force of an utterance”. Moreover, EFFs have been reported to express ‘epistemic modality’ (Halliday 1994: 342, cf. ‘attitudinal/modality’, Conrad & Biber 2004: 65) or ‘epistemic judgement’ (Palmer 1986: 168). This also shows that EFFs are routine means of conveying personal opinions and attitudes towards what is being said in the proposition.

As mentioned earlier, the phrases under study are usually used to express epistemic/evidential or evaluative stance. In fact, EFFs may even perform a wider spectrum of functions, viz. those “of encoding the speaker’s perceptions, feelings, [...] and evaluations in discourse” (Baumgarten & House 2009: 1184). In their research, Conrad & Biber (2004: 67) have demonstrated that EFFs which act as epistemic stance markers (called ‘personal stance expressions’) are often used to convey personal wishes or intentions, etc. However, their use is not limited to the sole conveying of stance, but is essential for performing interactional functions, e.g. “to reduce the imposition of one’s own opinion” (Conrad & Biber 2004: 68). These are exactly the interactional functions (Kärkkäinen 2003) that will be identified in this study with the aim of viewing EFFs from an interactional perspective (Subsection 3.4-3.6, 6.4).

On the whole, every EFF is predominantly associated with a one specific ‘indexical’ (Kärkkäinen 2003: 115) function. However, one and the same EFF may also perform more than one function which poses challenging problems for the analysis of these formulaic phrases. EFFs are used as multifunctional items for expressing different communicative, conversational, interactional and many other functions. The list of these functions is not exhaustive, since the phrases under scrutiny “can have almost infinite number of functions depending on the context” (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberg 2011: 229). In order to be able to cope with such multifunctional phrases as EFFs, I have proposed a delimited set of their functions which will be presented and discussed in Subsection 3.8. It is based on the findings of previous research studies, adapted to the possibilities of the present study and the nature of

the corpus data, and focused mainly on formal characteristics of EFFs (e.g. context, positional patterns). It is important to remember that EFFs are regarded in this thesis as fixed phrases which fulfil certain “identifiable discourse functions” (Conrad & Biber 2004: 58) in conversations.

For the sake of brevity, I have not mentioned other research studies devoted to the variety of the functions of EFFs. At this point, my focus will be on the aforementioned interactional and communicative functions (Subsections 3.4-3.7). But before moving to the discussion of them, it is necessary to consider the domains on which EFFs may function, thereby demonstrating the emphasis of this thesis on the interpersonal and metalinguistic domains (or levels).

3.2. On functional domains/levels of EFFs

As already mentioned, this Subsection presents a brief overview of the domains in which EFFs may perform different functions.

Despite the aforementioned variety of functions of EFFs, i.e. multifunctionality ascribed to EFFs, Brinton (1996: 40) claims that their allegedly heterogeneous functions may be subsumed under ‘textual’ and ‘interpersonal’ categories (cf. Aijmer’s (2002) ‘macrolevels’). Whereas the former ‘mode’ is concerned with the structuring of the meaning into the textual form, the latter one is “the expression of the speaker’s attitudes, evaluations, judgments, expectations, and demands, as well as of the nature of the social exchange, the role of the speaker and the role assigned to the hearer” (Brinton 1996: 40). For Östman (1982: 150-152) EFFs (‘discourse makers’ in his terminology) may even function on these two levels “simultaneously”, i.e. performing clausal or textual functions on the structural level, or interactive or attitudinal functions on the pragmatic level (cf. Brinton’s above categories). The researcher maintains that the “interactional purpose” is one of the significant ones (Östman 1982: 151), the stress on the importance of which is very much the same view that is followed in this thesis.

The levels discussed above have also been summarised under the term ‘metafunctions’, viz. experiential, interpersonal and textual (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberg 2011: 17). As it can be seen, there exists no clear-cut distinction between these levels or domains, so that some researchers have either added additional (cf. Erman 2001), new (cf. Schiffrin 1987) domains or used other definitions (cf. Müller’s (2005) ‘textual’ and ‘intertextual’ levels vs. Brinton’s (1996) ‘textual’ and ‘interpersonal’ categories). Overall, if considering the most acknowledged domains, namely the textual and the interpersonal ones,

one may refer to these as functions and define them as follows: whereas the first one implies “initiating and ending discourse, marking boundaries in the discourse, signalling topic shift and repairing discourse” (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberghe 2011: 231), the latter one involves the expression of “responses and attitudes as well as solidarity and face-saving” (ibid.). But what is even more important is that these two functions (domains) constitute the pragmatic meaning of EFFs (Brinton 2008: 18). This fact, together with these differently interpreted levels/domains, may contribute significantly to the understanding of the nature and use of EFFs in this study. It remains to be seen whether the selected EFFs may on both levels, but there is certainly no doubt that they perform functions either on the textual or the interpersonal level (cf. Kärkkäinen’s (2003) interpersonal functions).

Notwithstanding the above two widely acknowledged levels (i.e. textual/ideational and interpersonal), Erman (2001: 1339) has proposed a third supplementary functional ‘domain’, in which EFFs (pragmatic markers in his terminology) fulfil “metalinguistic functions”. Using a different terminology, he distinguishes between EFFs that function as ‘textual’, ‘social’ or ‘metalinguistic monitors’ (Erman 2001: 1339). This differentiation points clearly to those features on which this study makes an emphasis, especially to the metalinguistic function. The researcher argues that it would be not easy to conduct a research in this field of study without the additional domain proposed by him, in which EFFs function “as comments, not on the propositional content of the message, but on the implications of it and on the speaker’s intended effect with it, thereby functioning as **metalinguistic monitors**” (Erman 2001: 1339, original emphasis). Erman (2001: 1339) explains that “metalinguistic monitors are basically modal; that is, while using them the speaker informs the addressee about her/his commitment to the truth of the proposition or judgement of the importance or value of what is being communicated”. This kind of modal meaning and evaluative properties of EFFs are similar to the previously mentioned functions (cf. ‘epistemic modality’, epistemic judgement’). Moreover, in this domain EFFs may serve as ‘approximators’, ‘hedges’ and ‘emphasisers’ (Erman 2001: 1341). The modal functions of hedging and approximating (cf. ‘approximative’ function, Kaltenböck (2010: 250-255) seem to be one of the essential functions which EFFs perform in discourse, because they make it possible for the speaker to avoid being “completely committed to the truth value of the proposition in question” (Erman 2001: 1341).

Overall, EFFs may operate in different domains, which may demonstrate how multiple the functions they perform in conversations might be. Moreover, there are no “clear-cut boundaries” (Erman 2001: 1342) between these domains and they also embrace a wide variety of “functional subgroups” (cf. discussion in the preceding Subsection 3.1 on

‘multifunctionality’). A more detailed discussion of these subgroups in the domains is beyond the scope of this study. In the next Subsection the aforementioned interpersonal level and the metalinguistic domain will be implicitly referred to in the course of the determination of the set of the functions, which will be later identified in my corpus data.

3.3. EFFs and their functions in conversational discourse

This Subsection proceeds with the presentation of the functions which EFFs perform in conversational discourse. However, at this point it is necessary to focus on those functions which I will then use for the functional analysis of EFFs elicited from COCA. Since this research lays emphasis on the formulaic nature of routinised and conventionalised EFFs which constitute essential “tools for social interaction” (Wray & Perkins 2000: 13) and are “used for accomplishing different social actions” (Kärkkäinen 2012: 2195), their specific interactional and communicative functions should be determined in order to demonstrate how the speakers use them to meet the needs of conversation and how their fixed structure contributes to fulfil these communicative requirements. The main purpose of this Subsection is to delineate the most ‘identifiable’ of these functions of EFFs, especially those proposed by Kärkkäinen (2003) and Kaltenböck (2010), as well as to explain why they have been selected for the current study.

In the preceding Subsections, a number of different functional properties of EFFs have been addressed. I have shown how different researchers have approached these and similar phrases, why the multifunctionality of EFFs in discourse makes their identification so challenging, and on which levels they may fulfil their functions. It should be noted though that despite the well-founded and seemingly numerous studies involved in the preceding discussion, the number of studies devoted exclusively to the investigation of the functions EFFs is in fact very limited.

As mentioned at the very beginning of the thesis, it is grounded on the research carried out by Thompson (2003). However, the researcher’s emphasis on the holistically stored and retrieved ‘formulaic stance markers’, i.e. EFFs, independent of the associated (host) clause (Thompson 2003: 125), hardly gives insight into the functions which these phrases fulfil in discourse. For this reason, I will rely on other studies which have revealed the functional patterns of EFFs. Among them one can find studies conducted by Scheibman (2000) or Kärkkäinen (2003, 2007), which have examined EFFs in American English discourse, or by Kaltenböck (2007, 2008, 2010) or Van Bogaert (2009), who investigated EFFs in the British variant of English. In order to select the most suitable studies from the existing research into

the functions of EFFs and adapt these to the purposes of this research, I will focus exclusively on the interactional and communicative functions of EFFs which they perform in discourse. The reasons for such an approach to the multifunctionality of EFFs are twofold.

First, based on the findings of linguistic usage-based studies and formulaic language research, according to which EFFs (and similar formulaic expressions) “are linked to social and communicative situations” (Scheibman 2009: 635), it was necessary to examine the interdependence between the formal characteristics and “recurring communicative and social functions” (ibid.). The suggested interactional and communicative functions (Kärkkäinen 2003 and Kaltenböck 2010) seemed to be the most suitable for the selected corpus data, because their determination could make it possible to produce the most promising results, since the identification of the majority of them (but not all) is based on formal features of EFFs (e.g. positions, scope), and thus offering a feasible method of solving the problem of multifunctionality of EFFs in the current study.

Secondly, given that “linguistic structure is continually “becoming” “contingent on communicative and interactive exigencies” (Scheibman 2009: 636, cf. Hopper 1998: 156), the identification of the types of the selected functions which four particular EFFs perform in discourse had a great potential to reveal this dependence of EFFs on the interaction and thereof emerging fixed forms. Moreover, taking into account that EFFs are “exclusively functional” (Erman 2001: 1339) and syntactically isolated from the proposition, the two research studies in which the selected functions have been suggested (i.e. Kaltenböck 2010 and Kärkkäinen 2003) are those few studies which have focused on this functionality and positional mobility of EFFs. Besides, this kind of approach will help find out how the speakers use EFFs in conversations in which those EFFs perform important interactional and communicative functions and “thus play an important part in the communicative repertoire of speakers [...] (Conrad & Biber 2004: 58). The reason why my study is particularly focused on the interactional functions of EFFs lies in the fact that they are “particularly open to performing reflexive and interactive tasks, uses [of] which contribute to their frequency and routinization in conversational discourse” (Scheibman 2009: 635).

As mentioned above, apart from Kaltenböck’s (2010) study, research done by Kärkkäinen (2003) has been particularly suitable for the present study. It is even regarded as “the most comprehensive study of the functions” (Kaltenböck 2010: 246) of EFFs. Despite its limitation to the investigation of the functions of only one EFF (i.e. of *I think*), Kärkkäinen’s (2003) study has posited very important implications of EFFs, their properties and functions as expressions of epistemic stance. She suggests approaching EFFs from “a dialogical and

interactional perspective” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 187) which largely coincides with the way I analyse EFFs, since my aim is to trace their interactional functions in corpus data. Furthermore, such a viewpoint makes Kärkkäinen’s (2003) study very original in that it is the first research that has underscored “the interactional motivation for the expression of stance” (Kaltenböck 2010: 246). Of course, it is also of importance for the present thesis because of its emphasis on stance as an “*interactive activity*” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 105) that emerges “as a result of joint engagement in evaluative activity by the co-participants” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 185). As already discussed, my study likewise considers stance as “something jointly oriented to by the co-participants” (Kärkkäinen 2007: 212). Besides, in her further research on the EFF *I guess*, Kärkkäinen (2007: 213) maintains that if considering “stance-taking as a process and an activity oriented by the participants, we can see that some of these frequent markers [i.e. EFFs] then develop routine functions as organizers of such stance-taking activity”. These routine interactional functions are very much the ones that will be identified and interpreted in detail in the present study. Furthermore, Kärkkäinen’s (2003) seminal study on EFF *I think* has demonstrated that its functions are not limited to tentative, deliberative or other previously proposed functions, but perform “rather multiple functions in conversation”, which “tend to be more diverse than has hitherto been thought” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 174). This is in full accord with the multifunctionality of EFFs pointed out in Subsection 3.1. Finally, putting an emphasis on the very particular context and situation where EFFs were used has made it possible for Kärkkäinen (2003) to determine their specific functions (esp. of *I think*) (Kaltenböck 2010: 246).

Before moving on to the detailed discussion of the functions identified by Kärkkäinen (2003) (Subsection 3.4-3.6) and Kaltenböck (2010) (Subsection 3.7), several issues connected with previously identified social functions of EFF are in order. It is important to remember that the investigation EFFs is founded on the fact that formulaic language “plays a variety of roles that pivot on social interaction” (Wray 1998: 63), and that EFFs are “conventionalized pragmatic expressions” (Scheibman 2002: 32) that are followed by a complement clause, towards which the speaker expresses his opinion, attitude, assessment, etc. As postulated by Kärkkäinen (2003: 172), an EFF, viz. *I think* performs various multiple functions, because of the situations or contexts where “something more is going on socially” as simply the use of epistemic phrases in conversation. It seems that the speaker uses EFFs in order to meet some important socially determined functions. These functions were a focus of the research devoted to epistemicity, but worth noting in this respect is the new emphasis of this field of study, more precisely on the following aspects, as Kärkkäinen (2003: 26) concedes:

What is common to the more recent body of work is that they focus *not* on the speaker's expressed commitment or attitude towards knowledge as such (as a cognitive phenomenon), but on the interactional use that such expressions and attitudes may be put in an actual social context, and what kind of interactional effects and consequences they may have on the *recipient(s)* and on the interaction process.

The current study follows this tradition and focuses on the interactional functions of EFFs and the way they are used in specific contexts by American English speakers, thereby trying to trace the formulaic features that are reflected in them. To do so I will use the classification of the “interactionally contingent” (Kaltenböck 2010: 246) functions of an EFF *I think*, proposed by Kärkkäinen (2003: 115-170). She has identified three functions of a pre-positioned EFF “in its two discourse environments, at the beginning of a longer intonation unit and as a separate intonation unit coming before what it has in its scope” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 120), where EFFs perform ‘*starting-point*’ function, such as marking boundaries (e.g. framing an aside, upcoming answer, upcoming opinion sequence, etc.; Kärkkäinen 2003: 121-127) or ‘*routinely bringing in speaker perspective*’ (e.g. bringing in a different slant in an answer/in second assessment/in a second opinion sequence, prefacing weak agreement, etc.; Kärkkäinen 2003: 130-142), or act in the ‘*recipient-oriented design of utterances*’ (e.g. pursuing a certain type of response, displaying uncertainty and showing solidarity towards recipient, etc.; Kärkkäinen 2003: 146-156). Moreover, the researcher has indicated several uses where EFFs are used as separate intonation units, fulfilling the function of ‘*on-line planning*’ (e.g. displaying uncertainty in on-line planning) (Kärkkäinen 2003: 157-160). As for the interactional functions of a post-positioned EFF (i.e. appearing after its scope), they embrace the function of ‘*signaling completion and pursuing a response*’ (e.g. signalling completion of opinion sequence and turn, resigning turn completing and pursuing recipient verification, etc.) (Kärkkäinen 2003: 160-168).

In order to be able to carry out an appropriate functional analysis of the EFFs I will rely on the above interactional functions which emphasise the context or situation where EFFs occur, as well as the interactional aspects of the conversation. However, some issues regarding Kärkkäinen's methodology need further explanation.

First of all, it should be noted that although Kärkkäinen (2003: 107) emphasises intonation units as criteria for the encoding of EFFs (in her case of *I think*), in this thesis I will focus more on the conversational turns and their organisation with the help of EFFs in discourse, thereby paying a particular attention to a broader context where EFFs occur, i.e. “the interaction of [an EFF] with its co-text” (Kaltenböck 2010: 244). This strategy is motivated not only by the previously mentioned limitations of the corpus used in this study

(i.e. restrictions on intonation contours), but is grounded on the fact that in “conversation and many other forms of talk-in-interaction, turns-at-talk are the key proximate organizational niche into which bursts of language are introduced, and to which they may be expected to be adapted” (Schegloff 1996: 53). To put in simply, such turns-at-talk represent a kind of ‘skeleton’ in which EFFs occupy a certain position and perform specific functions. Importantly, this way of investigating EFFs “shifts the focus of inquiry towards conversational actions accomplished by speakers over sequences of turns” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 2). Furthermore, the transcribed texts of the conversations in the corpus make it possible to trace truncations, marked with double hyphen (--). According to the explanation of Du Bois et al. (1993: 18), these ‘truncated intonation units’ mean that “the speaker breaks off the intonation unit before completing its projected contour”. Thus, in case of these specific intonation units I will be able to identify where EFFs are positioned at the beginning of the next intonation unit (i.e. turn) or whether they are in the final position of this marked unit (turn). A detailed analysis of the ‘semantic-pragmatic’ (Kaltenböck 2010: 248) features, i.e. determination of the scope of EFFs (clausal vs. phrasal), will also be carried out in the present study with the aim to demonstrate not only how each EFF is used with respect to the scope it has, but also shed light on frequent positional patterns and show how particular functions are realised in these positions.

To sum up, apart from the functional analysis of EFFs, the emphasis of the corpus analysis of this study is put on the identification of the positional and co-occurrence patterns of EFFs within their broader contexts and turns-at-talk, thereby making use of those available intonation units marked in the corpus. Since the identification of the interactional functions proposed by Kärkkäinen (2003) will be done in a slightly different manner, i.e. foregrounding some parameters (e.g. turns) and paying less attention to the other (e.g. intonation units), their determination in my research needs further elaboration. I will now turn to a more detailed description of them in the following Subsections 3.4-3.6.

3.4. Interactional functions of pre-positioned EFFs (Kärkkäinen 2003)

Even if EFFs may “be scattered throughout the turn to perform their interactional functions” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 92), my research is aimed at finding certain common positional patterns of EFFs in turns-at-talk and tracing other formal characteristics of determining their interactional functions in discourse. This Subsection will focus on the most frequent position of EFFs – a turn-initial or ‘pre-positioned’ one (Kärkkäinen 2003) (*initial* in my terminology), in which they fulfil a number of interactional functions.

Kärkkäinen's (2003) research has shown that EFFs, such as *I think*, tend to take IU(intonation unit)-initial position conveying the speaker's stance, thus "establishing this stance before what it has in its scope" (Kärkkäinen 2003: 115). As already mentioned in the previous Subsection, in my thesis I will differentiate between the clausal or phrasal scope of EFFs. As for the identification itself, under the pre-positioned or initial EFFs I understand those formulaic phrases which occur before their scope (appearing before the proposition), and to which the speaker expresses his/her stance in a particular turn. The transition of the focus of this thesis from IU-initial to turn-initial position of EFFs should be stressed. This may be explained by the researcher's suggestion that "the IU-initial marking of epistemic stance is somewhat iconic with turn-initial position, where speakers commonly do special work to align their contribution with what went on before" (Kärkkäinen 2003: 68-69). Overall, the determination of the interactional functions of EFFs in this position is very important, because initial EFFs constitute just over a half of all analysed EFFs in my study, and are used by the speakers to "display a certain orientation towards a proposition or parts thereof, or to a longer sequence of discourse" (Kärkkäinen 2003: 115).

Due to space limitations, this Subsection will only briefly present the interactional functions proposed by Kärkkäinen (2003) that are typical for EFFs in their turn-initial position (See Tables 10A-10C in Appendix 9.1 for a more detailed description). They include the following three main types (Kärkkäinen 2003: 120-121):

- *a starting-point function to mark certain boundaries in discourse*
- *a starting-point function to mark that the upcoming turn will bring in a new or different perspective compared to the prior turn*
- *an explicitly recipient-oriented design of utterances*

Despite the division of the functions of turn-initial EFFs into these three types it is not possible to draw a strict boundary line between them, since they "are not completely distinct varieties but form a continuum" (Kärkkäinen 2003: 120) from the first type through the second to the third one. To begin with, the first two types of the above functions of turn-initial EFFs can be subsumed under the term '*starting-point*' functions. However, the first one indicates the function of EFFs when they mark boundaries, for example, frame an aside, an upcoming answer, an upcoming opinion sequence or subsidiary information (and uncertainty) (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 121-127). By this function Kärkkäinen (2003: 121) understands the cases in which EFFs are serving as a "starting-point for a perspective, or providing a *frame* (or part of a frame) that simply *marks a boundary* of some kind in the talk". Moreover, this function is

similar to the aforementioned ‘textual’ level on which EFFs fulfil several ‘discourse-organising’ functions (cf. Erman’s 2001: 1339, ‘textual monitors’). Overall, performing this function, turn-initial EFFs work as “*a frame [...] at a boundary in discourse*’, at a point of transition, such as a topic shift, a shift to meta-discourse or subsidiary information, or a shift back to an earlier or to a completely new point” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 128) (See Table 10A).

As for the second type of the starting-point function, it is performed by EFFs in the contexts “where the current speaker perceives some minor interactional trouble in the preceding turn” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 130). Kärkkäinen (2003) notes that EFFs which perform this starting-point function of “a new or different perspective” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 146) tend to appear in slightly different contexts as in those of the marking boundaries in discourse (the first type of the above functions), especially in the cases when an EFF is used in specific sequential positions, above all in “second-pair parts of adjacency pairs” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 130). Importantly, an EFF “locates and *routinely attends to that trouble* in the current turn, by marking specifically that the *current speaker’s perspective will follow*” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 130). While locating the given trouble in the preceding turn, the speaker tries “to bring in a slightly different perspective or slant to the matter expressed in the prior turn, to disagree with it, or to display uncertainty about its interactional import or relevance” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 142). In other words, in these cases EFFs are used for marking the starting-point of the speaker’s point of view towards the issue discussed in the previous turn, which, in turn, constitutes his or her response or attitude towards it. Kärkkäinen (2003: 130) calls such instances of the starting-point function of the turn-initial EFFs a ‘routinely bringing in speaker perspective’. They are exemplified in various interactional environments where EFFs bring in a different slant in an answer, bring in second assessment, a second opinion sequence, introduce a disaligning second opinion sequence, preface weak agreement (and subsequent disagreement) or second assessment (cf. Pomerantz 1984), as well as dealing with unclear import of previous turn (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 130-142, see Table 10B in Appendix).

Apart from the two aforementioned types of the starting-point functions of indicating boundaries and introducing the speaker’s new or different perspective/slant with respect to the prior turn, turn-initial EFFs may also be used “in more demanding trouble spots in the interaction”, where they do “some rather active or purposeful *strategic interactional work*” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 146) within various sequential positions. Kärkkäinen (2003: 156) has demonstrated that EFFs may serve different purposes in the ‘*recipient-oriented design of utterances*’ in discourse (cf. addressee-oriented meaning of pragmatic markers, Stubbe & Holmes 1995: 64). Often in the course of conversation the speakers have to create and change

their utterances according to the given situation, which, for instance, may occur “when a speaker is engaged in troubles-talk (about him- or herself) or has to make an assertion concerning a co-participant or, in some cases, of some referent outside the immediate situation” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 156-157). Moreover, EFFs tend to occur in the situations when the speaker is about to “ensure a certain type of alignment from the recipients and to guide their interpretations rather closely” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 146). On the whole, the function of the ‘recipient-oriented design of utterances’ is fulfilled by EFFs in order to “pay respect to the recipient’s but also to the speaker’s attempts to maintain face in interaction” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 160). The researcher illustrates this function by the examples in which EFFs are used by the speakers to pursue a certain type of response (e.g. because he/she disagrees with the previous utterance), to display uncertainty and show solidarity towards recipient, or to respond to inappropriate alignment by displaying heightened commitment (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 146-156, see Table 10C in Appendix).

It should be noted that the distinction between the above three functions is not clear-cut, but represents “a continuum and the dividing lines are certainly hazy in between” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 160). Interestingly, what makes them even more closely connected with each other is the fact that the use of EFFs is interactionally motivated and that EFFs themselves emerge “from the immediate interaction between speaker and recipients in very local contexts of use” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 161).

3.5. Interactional functions of post-positioned EFFs – signalling completion and pursuing a response

This Subsection is devoted to the cases of the use of EFFs when they occur after what they have in their scope, thereby facing backwards “something that has already been verbalized” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 161). For (Kärkkäinen 2003) it means that EFFs are “encoded as a separate IU” (*ibid.*, cf. Subsection 3.6). However, in the current study an attempt will be made to look at turn-final instances of EFFs (instead of regarding them as separate intonation units) in endeavour to attribute the function of ‘signalling completion and pursuing a response’ defined by Kärkkäinen (2003) to post-positioned EFFs. Moreover, it will be interesting to find out whether a post-positioned EFF is able to signal completion with a concomitant “turn exchange work” and at the same time aiming at uptake from the participants of the discussion (Kärkkäinen 2003: 170).

Concerning the scope of EFFs in these cases, it tends to be ‘turn-so-far’, whereby EFFs usually mark “turn completion and turn exchange” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 162). If the

speaker makes use of these functions of EFFs, he or she then tends to “shift or change the direction of [his/her] talk” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 168). As for the sequential environment of post-positioned EFFs, they have been found in Kärkkäinen’s data in “a clear adjacency pair, namely in a second pair part, as in an answer to a question, or within an extended second opinion, or answer sequence (ibid.). As regards the cases in which post-positioned EFFs have been found in Kärkkäinen’s (2003) research, they include three instances of turn-final EFFs that are used for “signalling turn completion (and emphasising uncertainty)”, “completion of opinion sequence” and “for re-signalling turn completion and pursuing recipient verification” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 161-170) (For more details see Appendix 9.1, Table 11).

3.6. Interactional functions of EFFs as separate units – on-line planning

This Subsection deals with the cases of EFFs occurring as separate units. It should be noted that in Kärkkäinen’s (2003) analysis of pre-positioned and post-positioned EFFs, she distinguished between the instance of the former and the latter ones occurring as separate (intonation) units. In the previous Subsections I have already mentioned that the post-positioned cases of EFFs will be regarded as turn-final occurrences in my study, contrary to Kärkkäinen’s treatment of them as separate intonation units. The researcher differentiates between the pre-positioned EFFs (i.e. IU-initially) and those realised as separate IUs. This has also been demonstrated in Subsection 3.4 which deals with the *starting-point function* of EFFs and their use in ‘recipient-oriented design utterances’. The cases of pre-positioned EFFs encoded ‘exclusively’ as a separate unit, whereby they project forward to their clausal or phrasal scope (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 161) will be described in more detail in the next paragraph.

In her research Kärkkäinen (2003: 157) highlights that in the cases of separate EFFs they “do special interactive work” (e.g. rhetoric story-telling devices, instances of on-line planning). In my thesis I will try to identify such cases of the use of EFFs in my data, treating these as separate turns, i.e. used as isolated interactional turns (cf. ‘turn-constructive units’, Kärkkäinen 2003: 13).

As separate units, EFFs are often accompanied by various hesitation markers or other EFFs, and tend to be used mostly in “answers or extended answer sequences” and occur almost exclusively in such interactional environment as “on-line planning” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 158). In the three cases, in which Kärkkäinen found EFF *I think* functioning as a separate unit, it has been used by only one speaker in false starts and in “cases of clear on-line processing” (ibid.) “for the function of displaying doubt and uncertainty about what will follow, or in

other words, its function is quite close to its semantic meaning” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 160). Considering such a limited number of examples any generalisations about the function of separately used EFFs under question would be premature and thus I will not consider such function of EFFs in the present thesis. Moreover, I may not be able to identify so ‘precisely’ such cases of EFFs (i.e. ‘displaying uncertainty in on-line planning’) in this thesis, using the selected corpus data. It should also be noted that it will be quite difficult to find out differences between the cases where EFFs occur turn-initially and the given cases where EFFs appear before their scope, thereby appearing as a separate unit. Thus, neither EFFs acting as ‘separate units’, nor their interactional functions will be analysed in the present thesis.

3.7. Additional communicative functions (Kaltenböck 2010)

This Subsection is aimed at complementing the set of EFFs’ functions by Kaltenböck’s (2010) communicative functions. The set of the functions itself consists predominantly of the interactional functions defined by Kärkkäinen (2003) which have been overviewed in the previous Subsections of this Section, however, the communicative functions proposed by Kaltenböck (2010), should supplement the aforementioned range of the interactional functions of EFFs. These should not only contribute to the variety of the functions of EFFs which I will then use in the analysis of the elicited corpus data, but also to the understanding of the use of EFFs in conversational discourse in general.

It is important to remember that Kärkkäinen (2003) emphasises the role of intonation for the identification of the interactional functions of EFFs, thereby posing a challenge for the current study, because it is focused more on the context, positional patterns, scope and turns-at-talk, rather than on intonation patterns or prosodic features as the criteria for the determination of the functions of EFFs. The communicative functions proposed by Kaltenböck (2010) have in this relation a definite advantage, since for the determination of some of one may need to identify several formal features (e.g. scope in the case of the approximative function, etc.). Thus, the inclusion of the researcher’s communicative functions in this study should compensate for the ‘disadvantages’ of the identification of Kärkkäinen’s (2003) interactional functions, which requires the consideration of EFFs in term of intonation units. However, it should be noted that Kaltenböck (2010: 267) has also emphasised the dependence of the determination of the functions of EFFs on “prosodic realisation”, but nevertheless has found out that the function of an EFF (viz. *I think*) is “shaped to a considerable extent by its formal co-textual realisation”, e.g. scope. Overall, according to the researcher by determining positional and prosodic patterns, scope, and co-occurring elements

of EFFs it is possible to detect four core communicative functions, viz. shield function, approximation function, structural/filler function and booster function (Kaltenböck 2010: 267-268). Again, similar to the previous considerations concerned with Kärkkäinen's (2003) interactional functions, I will concentrate predominantly on those communicative functions of EFFs which 'allow' their identification by considering other than intonation patterns or prosodic contours, e.g. turn positions, co-text or scope. Hence, in this Subsection I will overview only shield function and filler or structural function suggested by Kaltenböck (2010). The reasons for this delimitation are twofold.

Firstly, when speaking about the approximating function, one may distinguish it from the cases of shield function, because as approximators EFFs "affect only a part of proposition" (Kaltenböck 2010: 254), i.e. have a phrasal (non-clausal) scope. Doing this local work, the EFFs which function as approximators tend to express fuzziness or vagueness "within the propositional content proper" (Prince et al. 1982: 85, in Kaltenböck 2010: 253). Though it might be possible to find this function in the corpus data, the results will probably be not representative enough. Approximative uses of EFFs are rather rare, since they may only be observed in the cases of EFFs having phrasal scope (which are not frequent in the extracted corpus data, cf. Section 6.2). Moreover, as noted by Kaltenböck (2010: 254), approximative EFFs tend to be used in the contexts where there are such indications as numerals or dates, etc. which, in turn, may possibly occur quite seldom in my data. Nevertheless, I do not exclude this function from my set of the considered functions of EFFs. In case I find some examples with EFFs seemingly performing this function in my data, I will, first of all, compare them with those similar interactional functions introduced by Kärkkäinen (2003), especially the starting-point function of EFFs to 'frame an aside' and 'subsidiary information (and expressing uncertainty)' (Kärkkäinen 2003: 129, cf. Subsection 3.4) (cf. metalinguistic monitors functioning as 'approximators', Erman 2001: 1341); and only then be able to indicate approximative uses of EFFs. This means that this function is a kind of an 'extra' function in my set of the functions of EFFs.

Secondly, the forth function of the communicative functions given by Kaltenböck (2010: 260), which he calls 'booster function', will not be taken into consideration in my study. The main reason for its exclusion from my set of the functions lies in the main characteristics needed for its identification, viz. prosodic realisation, pitch movement, tonicity (Kaltenböck 2010: 260-263), which are not possible to detect in the type of corpus data which COCA offers.

The primary task of this Subsection is to briefly overview the two selected functions: shield function (Subsection 3.7.1) and structural or filler function (Subsection 3.7.2) proposed by Kaltenböck (2010).

3.7.1. Shield function

Using the term ‘shield’ (Price et al. 1982: 89, in Kaltenböck 2010: 248) to describe EFFs, Kaltenböck (2010: 248) has identified ‘shield function’ as one of his core communicative functions. Fulfilling this function, EFFs mark a “fuzziness in the relationship between the propositional content and the speaker, that is in the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the proposition conveyed” (Price et al. 1982: 85, in Kaltenböck 2010: 249). As pointed out by the researcher, when performing this function, EFFs tend to be “closely linked” to their clausal scope (cf. phrasal scope of EFFs in the case of approximator function) (ibid.). Since the EFF (*I think*) with clausal scope predominates in his data, it is automatically supposed to perform shield function, constituting “the default or unmarked use” of the analysed EFF (Kaltenböck 2010: 249).

This however does not mean that all EFFs with clausal scope may to be subsumed under the term ‘shield’. On the contrary, this function should be seen as a “very general concept which is based on the interaction of [an EFF] with its immediate co-text, i.e. the host construction or rather its proposition” (Kaltenböck 2010: 250). In other words, the given shield function of EFFs may be further developed into more fine-grained sub-functions in discourse (ibid.). Finally, it remains to be seen whether these subtle distinctions and the cases of shield function may be traced in my data, but at least its ‘overall’ determination will certainly throw light on the extend of the EFFs having a clausal or phrasal host construction in their scope.

3.7.2. Structural / filler function

EFFs which perform structural or filler function are essential text structuring and organising devices in discourse (cf. the starting-point function of marking boundaries, Kärkkäinen 2003: 121, Subsection 3.4; or ‘textual level/domain’/EFFs as ‘textual monitors’ Erman 2001: 1339, Subsection 3.2). Such structuring with the help of EFFs makes them highly suitable and practical means to be used “to segment text, structure information flow, signal and alleviate disfluencies, or for the sequential organisation of talk” (Kaltenböck 2010: 260). As for the scope of EFFs acting as fillers, it may be either phrasal or even “no longer clearly identifiable at all” due to semantic erosion (Kaltenböck 2010: 257, cf. Subsection 3.7.1

on the clausal scope in the cases of shield function of EFFs). Of course, this poses certain problems for the determination of EFFs performing this function. However, the fact that they tend to co-occur with other disfluency ('filler-like') features, such as "fillers (e.g. *you know, I mean*), hesitation sounds (*uhm, uh*), word repetitions, pauses [...] and backtracking/restarts" (ibid.), may help trace the cases of structural EFFs. In order to better understand the variety of possible context-depending communicative functions which EFFs fulfil in discourse I will now briefly overview the structural/filler function of initial, medial and final EFFs outlined by Kaltenböck (2010: 257-259). (Note that here semantic-pragmatic positions of EFFs are meant, not their turn positions).

Initial:

EFFs that perform structural function and occur in the initial position fulfil "**stalling function**, which allows the speaker to buy time to prepare his/her upcoming utterance" (Kaltenböck 2010: 259). It is essential in the case of taking the turn by the speaker (ibid.).

Medial:

As for the medial EFFs which act as 'gap-fillers', they have been found in Kaltenböck's data as placed "between subject and predicate, and between main verb (predicator) and complementation, and after relative elements" (Kaltenböck 2010: 259). In these positions an EFF "ensures smooth online production [...] or structures the message to highlight certain parts or enhance a thematic link with the preceding discourse" (ibid). This means that apart from a 'gap-filling function', structural EFFs may serve as a 'partition' with the help of which the preceding element, termed 'marked theme' may be separated from the prior or following discourse (Taglicht 1984: 22, in Ziv 2002: 2-3). At the same time, this initial detached constituent ('marked theme') represents "a link between the utterance at hand and the adjacent discourse segment" (Ziv 2002: 2). Aiding the marked theme in performing such a 'linking function', EFFs act as important structural tools for separating a topic from a comment, e.g. a subject from its predicate (Kaltenböck 2010: 259). Overall, fulfilling this function, an EFF not only stresses "the thematic structure of the [comment], with concomitant linking function of the marked theme, but also provides a convenient 'breathing space' for the production of a syntactically complex construction" (Kaltenböck 2010: 259-260).

Final:

Similar to the post-positioned EFFs performing interactional function of 'signalling completion and pursuing a response' (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 161, Subsection 3.4), clause-final structural EFFs fulfil a "**response eliciting function**" (Kaltenböck 2010: 258). As

demonstrated in example (14b) the given EFF marks the speaker's completed utterance, thereby inviting the recipient to react or respond to it (ibid.).

Apart from the above cases of filler function of EFFs, Kaltenböck (2010: 260) mentions an additional particular case of structural EFFs, when they mark "the beginning or end of a communicative chunk" (cf. 'bracket' of units of talk, Schiffrin 1987: 31) or "a bracket at a boundary in discourse" (Kärkkäinen 2003: 128, in Kaltenböck 2010: 260). This function seems to be very similar to Kärkkäinen's (2003) of function marking boundaries. It is performed by EFFs in the cases when they mark the end of the main utterance and are positioned before the other one (e.g. an afterthought) (ibid., cf. example 16).

3.8. Towards a specific set of the functions of EFFs

Taking into account the above discussion of the interactional and communicative functions of EFFs this Subsection presents of a specific set of the functions of EFFs selected for this study. The goal of this Subsection is to provide the delimited list of the functions which EFFs may fulfil in conversational discourse, the identification of which is primarily based on the consideration of formal features, e.g. positions, scope, context, etc. In order to demonstrate the numerous interactional and communicative functions and their sub-functions as clear and possible I have compiled a table where the possible overlappings between the functions (wavy lines between the columns) and the type of the scope associated with the given function is indicated (Table 1 below).

Table 1. A set the interactional and communicative functions of EFFs in conversational discourse: schematic presentation

Functions of EFFs	Scope	Initial/turn-initial EFFs	Medial EFFs	Final/turn-final EFFs
<i>Starting-point function to mark boundaries</i> Source: Kärkkäinen (2003: 120-127)	Clausal or phrasal	used to mark boundaries (e.g. to frame an aside, an upcoming answer /opinion sequence or frame subsidiary information (and express uncertainty))	cf. structural function of medial EFFs (3)	Ø
<i>Starting-point function of a new/ different perspective</i> Source: Kärkkäinen (2003: 130-142)	Clausal or phrasal	used to mark that the upcoming turn will bring in a new/different perspective compared to the prior turn (e.g. bringing in a different slant in an answer/ second assessment/a second opinion sequence, or introducing a disaligning second opinion, prefacing weak agreement (and subsequent disagreement); dealing with unclear import of previous turn/prefacing second assessment)	Ø	Ø
<i>EFFs in a recipient-oriented design of utterances</i> Source: Kärkkäinen (2003: 146-156)	Clausal or phrasal	used to design/redesign/modify to utterances to meet the requirements of the speaker-recipient relations (e.g. to pursue a certain type of response, display uncertainty and show solidarity towards recipient, and respond to inappropriate alignment by displaying heightened commitment)	Ø	Ø

Functions of EFFs	Scope	Initial/turn-initial EFFs	Medial EFFs	Final/turn-final EFFs
<i>Function of signalling completion and pursuing response</i> Source: Kärkkäinen (2003: 161-170)	Clausal or phrasal	Ø	Ø	used to signal turn completion (and emphasising uncertainty), or completion of opinion sequence; or to resignal turn completion and pursue recipient verification
<i>Structural/filler function</i> Source: Kaltenböck (2010: 256-259)	Unclear scope	fulfil stalling function (to “buy time” for the upcoming utterance)	1. fulfil gap-filling function/”ensures smooth online production” 2. act as a ‘partition’ to turn the preceding element into a ‘marked theme’ and separate it from the following discourse; and to stress thematic structure 3. serve to mark off the beginning/end of a communicative chunk (cf. the starting-point function to mark boundaries at the very beginning of this table)	perform ‘response eliciting function’ or signal completion/mark the end of the turn (cf. function of signalling completion and pursuing response above)
<i>Shield function</i> Source: Kaltenböck (2010: 248-250)	Clausal scope	used to express politeness/mitigation/ etc.	used to express politeness/mitigation/ etc.	used to express politeness/mitigation/ etc.
<i>Approximative function</i> Source: Kaltenböck (2010: 250-255)	Phrasal scope	Ø	used to express lack of precision/ approximation	Ø

Table 1 displays schematically the major formal features, i.e. position and scope, with the help of which and together with the detailed analysis of the conversational situation and the context, it is possible to identify the functions under consideration.

It should be noted that due to the aforementioned multifunctionality of EFFs, their functions may also overlap. This is also demonstrated in Table 1, more precisely, in the case of the interactional function of ‘signalling completion and pursuing response’ of turn-final EFFs and the structural/filler function of final EFFs; as well as in the case of shield function and approximator function, since the distinction between the two, namely between semantics and pragmatic, is “far from clear-cut” (Kaltenböck 2010: 256).

Lastly, this final Subsection has presented the set of the functions which will be later identified in the corpus analysis. Their illustration has also shown how overlapping they may be and how some of them may depend on their positions, scope or both. In the following Section I will discuss in more detail these formal features of EFFs.

4. Positional patterns, clausal and phrasal scope of EFFs

Based on the preceding Section 3, devoted to the functions of EFFs which they perform in discourse, it may be concluded that these functions depend not only on the type of the context or a conversational situation in which they occur, but also on their positions. Of course, as pointed out by various researchers, intonation patterns, prosodic contours, pitch, tone, etc. should also be regarded as essential characteristics for the determination of the functions of EFFs, but these are outside the scope of this thesis. This Section provides an overview of the possible positions of EFFs which affect these positional criteria and their peculiarities, and which will be taken into account in the current study. Moreover, it will outline the types of the scope which EFFs may have, viz. clausal and phrasal scope.

To begin with, one of the first researchers who highlighted the possibility of EFFs to take different positions within the sentence was Urmson (1952). He pointed out that ‘parenthetical verbs’ combined with the first-person pronoun (EFFs) may be used ‘parenthetically’, i.e. be positioned initially, medially or finally in the clause, as in the examples below (Urmson 1952: 481, in Simon-Vandenberg 2000: 42):

- (3) a). I suppose that your house is very old.
- b). Your house is, I suppose, very old.
- c). Your house is very old, I suppose.

This ‘parenthetical’ use of EFFs shows vividly their positional mobility, which, in turn, is one of those important features that characterise their formulaic use, on which the present thesis is

focused. While the first sentence (3a) with *that*-complementiser, which may also be omitted (cf. *I suppose your house is very old*), presents a usual ‘direct’ grammatical structure of the sentence with an ‘ordinary’ instance of the EFF, (3b) and (3c) have some kind of ‘inverted’ organisation, where EFFs occur clause-medially and clause-finally, respectively. Such ‘parenthetical’ syntax (Goddard & Karlsson 2003: 5) represents specific syntactic characteristics of EFFs, thereby showing their relationship to the properties of epistemic adverbs. Thompson & Mulac (1991: 317) even differentiate these two positions from the initial one (i.e. before a clause), calling them ‘epistemic parentheticals’. Importantly, the more positionally mobile EFFs become, “the more grammaticalized they are” (Rodríguez Louro & Harris *forthc.* 18, cf. Thompson & Mulac 1991). According to Thompson (2002: 142-143), whose terminology I use in this thesis, EFFs “may precede, interrupt, or follow their associated utterances”. In other words, EFFs which have undergone the process of grammaticalisation may take different positions within the utterance. For this reason, in the current study I will determine the tendencies of the positional patterns of EFFs and try to find out where in the utterance the speaker inserts EFFs most of all, and which functions they perform thereby. In order to support my endeavour to examine the positional patterns of EFFs, I refer to Aijmer’s (1997: 24) research, in which she emphasises the importance and relevance of the position in the utterance of EFFs (‘modal particles’) to their functions.

Apart from concentrating on such formal criteria for the determination of the functions of EFFs as positional patterns, turn positions, context, larger sequential environment, and co-occurring linguistic devices, I will also consider the type of the host construction which EFF may have in their scope, namely, clausal or non-clausal/phrasal one, and which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Though it is widely accepted that EFFs are usually have a clausal scope, i.e. “scope over a clausal host construction which expresses a full proposition” (Kaltenböck 2010: 249-250), they may also have other than clausal construction in their scope. Furthermore, Kärkkäinen (2003: 116) mentions that EFFs may have the upcoming proposition (e.g. full clause) or “parts thereof (most commonly an NP [...]) in its immediate, for the moment syntactically defined, scope”. Besides, for Kärkkäinen (2003) EFFs realised as separate units are “doing some very *local work* in conversational interaction” (*ibid.*) with regard to the upcoming turn. Hence, while examining my corpus data I will additionally pay attention to the scope which EFFs tend to have. Doing so, it will also be important to trace what positions of EFFs are associated with phrasal scope, because these have been demonstrated to have a peculiar positional behaviour (*ibid.*). For example, in Kaltenböck’s (2010: 251) data EFFs,

which had a phrasal scope were syntactically positioned in particular slots of the sentences, such as between a preposition and its NP complement, an NP head and its pre-head dependent (determiner or adjective), within NP or preposition, as well as linked to elliptical or incomplete hosts (ibid., cf. Table 10.A.2, in Kaltenböck 2010: 272). Of course, it will be necessary to carry out a similar detailed analysis of the positions of EFFs with clausal scope. Finally, it should be noted that under the notion of *scope* discussed above I mean semantic-pragmatic scope of EFFs, “i.e. the ‘topic’ to which the ‘comment’ of [the EFF] applies”, rather than the syntactic scope (Kaltenböck 2010: 248).

To sum up, this Section has indicated the possible positions and the type of the scope of EFFs. The consideration of these parameters, above all the positions of EFFs, is of great importance for the current study, since it is aimed at tracing the formulaic features reflected in the use and functions of EFFs.

5. Data and method

This Section presents the source data used for the analysis of EFFs and describes the methodology developed in this thesis. It is therefore subdivided into subsections devoted to the demonstration of the corpus and the data elicited from it (Subsection 5.1), the methods (Subsection 5.2) and the coding schema used in the present study (Subsection 5.3). In addition, the last subsection overviews the exclusions and limitations of this study.

5.1. Corpus analysis

Since this thesis uses a corpus of American English as the basis for the analysis of the four selected EFFs, viz. *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I assume* and *I presume* it is necessary to provide information about this corpus and give reasons for the choice of these naturally occurring data. Thus, this Subsection starts with the presentation of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) that has been used in this study (Subsection 5.1.1). The next Subsection 5.1.2 is a short overview of the extracted corpus data. However, not only will the corpus as a large collection of texts and the elicited ‘excerpts’ therefrom be covered in this Subsection, but also the selected data, i.e. EFFs themselves, which will then be thoroughly investigated with respect to their positional patterns, turn positions, context, scope, larger sequential environment, co-occurring linguistic devices, and consequently, their functions in discourse. Hence, Subsection 5.1.3 is devoted to the phrases under study and aimed at delimiting the set of EFFs. In addition, the variety of existing EFFs and their frequencies in

COCA that are necessary for the process of the delimitation of EFFs will also be touched upon in this Subsection.

5.1.1. COCA (spoken part) – the corpus used in this study

As already mentioned, this thesis is a study based on a computer-processed corpus, viz. the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies 2008-). This corpus, and especially its spoken part, will “serve as a basis for linguistic analysis and description” (Kennedy 1998: 1) in the present research. Therefore, this Subsection presents the corpus used for the EFFs analysis in this study and also explains why this particular corpus has been chosen for the current investigation.

COCA is “composed of more than 450 million words in 189,431 texts, including 20 million words each year from 1990-2012. The most recent addition of texts (Apr 2011 - Jun 2012) was completed in June 2012” (<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>, 17 August 2013). It is therefore considered to be the “most representative official corpus sample of English in current existence” (Mittelberg et al. 2006: 41). Since ‘representativeness’ (cf. McEnery & Wilson 1996) is one of the important features to be taken into account while choosing a corpus for a research, COCA seems to be a very suitable data source for the present study. Overall, COCA is the most representative and reliable corpora both qualitatively and quantitatively. Davies (2010: 447) describes COCA as follows:

The Corpus of Contemporary American English is the first large, genre-balanced corpus of any language, which has been designed and constructed from the ground up as a ‘monitor corpus’, and which can be used to accurately track and study recent changes in the language. The 400 million words corpus is evenly divided between spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic journals. Most importantly, the genre balance stays almost exactly the same from year to year, which allows it to accurately model changes in the ‘real world’.

Since this study is concerned with the investigation of the EFFs in conversational discourse, only the spoken part of COCA has been used for the extraction of corpus data. It contains 95,385,672 words, encompassing conversations which take place from 1990 till 2012. The exact distribution of the number of words per each year in spoken genre in COCA is demonstrated in Table 2 below: (<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>, 3 August 2013).

Table 2. Number of words per year in the spoken part of COCA, source: <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>, 3 August 2013)

Year	<i>The number of words in the spoken part of COCA</i>
1990	4,332,983
1991	4,275,641
1992	4,493,738
1993	4,449,330
1994	4,416,223
1995	4,506,463
1996	4,060,792
1997	3,874,976
1998	4,424,874
1999	4,417,997
2000	4,414,772
2001	3,987,514
2002	4,329,856
2003	4,404,978
2004	4,330,018
2005	4,396,030
2006	4,304,513
2007	3,882,586
2008	3,635,622
2009	3,969,587
2010	4,095,393
2011	4,033,627
2012	2,348,159
TOTAL	95,385,672

The above Table shows that in 2012 in the spoken part of COCA there were only half as many words as in the previous years, i.e. 1990-2011, which may easily be explained by the fact that the last update has been made in summer 2012. Nevertheless, for this study I was able to extract the most recent data, trying to elicit as many texts (excerpts) from 2012 as possible. I will discuss the results of this elicitation process of the most current corpus data in more detail in the next Subsection.

Regarding the content of the spoken part of COCA, it consists of the “transcripts of unscripted conversation from more than 150 different TV and radio programs” (<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>, 3 August 2013). Some questions regarding such compilation of transcripts have been discussed in detail by the founders of the corpus (cf. http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/help/spoken_e.asp, 17 August). Perhaps, one of the most important issues for this study in this respect is the question of the ‘naturalness’ of these texts, because the investigation of EFFs used in ‘real’ and naturally occurring conversation is an important prerequisite for reliable results. According to the explanation given by the creators of the spoken part of COCA, there is indeed one fact that makes the conversations not ‘completely natural’, namely because “the people knew that they were on a national TV or radio program,

and they therefore probably altered their speech accordingly” (http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/help/spoken_e.asp, 17 August). However, despite these possible restrictive influences on the speaker’s word choice, the conversations in the spoken part of COCA “seem to represent “off the air” conversation quite nicely” (ibid.). Moreover, taking into consideration the fact that any spoken corpus may hardly be absolutely authentic and represent purely natural conversation “as long as people know that they’re being recorded” (ibid.), it may be concluded that apart from these possible ‘unnatural’ features of the conversations in the spoken part of COCA, it represents actual naturally occurring conversation between the speakers of American English.

But not only have the aforementioned size, representativeness, regular update and naturalness of COCA (i.e. its spoken part) been the criteria for the use of its data in this study, but also the fact that the corpus itself has been employed for the investigation of EFFs for the first time. In some of the studies devoted to the research on EFFs (in American and British English) such corpora as the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (SBCSAE) (e.g. Scheibman 2002, Kärkkäinen 2003, 2007, 2012), the British National Corpus (BNC) (e.g. Van Bogaert 2010), the London-Lund Corpus (LLC) (e.g. Aijmer 1997, 2002, Stenström 1990), the International Corpus of English – Great-Britain (ICE-GB) (e.g. Mindt 2003, Van Bogaert 2006, Kaltenböck 2010), the International Corpus of English – Australia (ICE-AUS) (e.g. Rodríguez Louro & Harris *forthc.*), the Birmingham Spoken Corpus (COBUILD) (e.g. Diani 2004), the Bergen Corpus of London Teenager language (COLT) (e.g. Andersen 2001), the Cambridge English Corpus (CANCODE) (e.g. O’Keefe et al. 2007), etc. have been used. As can easily be seen, the corpora other than the corpus chosen for this study (i.e. COCA) have been consulted so far in order to undertake research into EFFs. The variety of these corpora also shows that corpus-based analysis has been often and successfully carried out in the studies dealing with the EFFs or similar phrases. The present study uses COCA as the basis for the analysis and thus incorporates a new source of data for the investigation of EFFs.

To sum up, COCA has been employed in this study due to its size, representativeness, naturally occurring examples of authentic conversations, and continually updated texts. COCA has also been chosen because it can easily be analysed using a well-structured free online interface. In addition, this corpus offers a variety of functions, with the help of which it was possible to extract the corpus data needed and expand the context to be able to analyse EFFs within a broader contextual environment. Finally, the data from the spoken part of COCA have not been used before as source data for the investigation of EFFs, which makes the current study distinct from the previous ones.

5.1.2. The extracted corpus data

This Subsection will outline briefly the corpus data elicited from COCA, the sources they come from, and the years of their addition/record.

As already discussed in the previous Subsection, the extracted corpus data comprise transcripts of various conversations taken from “more than 150 different TV and radio programs” (<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>, 3 August 2013). Among these sources one may find such programmes as “*All Things Considered* (NPR), *Newshour* (PBS), *Good Morning America* (ABC), *Today Show* (NBC), *60 Minutes* (CBS), *Hannity and Colmes* (Fox), *Jerry Springer*, etc.)” (ibid.). Of course, all these programmes will be indicated after the examples (excerpts from the corpus data), which will be given to illustrate the results of the analysis of the selected EFFs. Moreover, since these programmes are additionally marked according to the type of the particular programme edition, e.g. *ABC_PrimeTime*, *ABC_ThisWeek*, *ABC_GMA*, *ABC_20/20*, etc, the information about the examples will contain these details of a given source as well. Besides, the numbers of these excerpts elicited from the spoken part of COCA will also be provided.

It should be noted that the corpus data have been extracted from COCA with the help of the function “*CLICK FOR MORE CONTEXT*”. This has made it possible to receive a more expanded context in which EFFs occur. In other words, by using this function, i.e. clicking at each instance where an EFF occurred, I was able to elicit fifty ‘expanded’ conversational excerpts for each of the four selected EFFs. Such data with larger contextual environment of EFFs are particularly important for the functional analysis of the current study.

As for the years when the corpus data were recorded, they need to be explained in more detail. Of course, I was trying to collect the most current data, i.e. dated 2012. However, there were not always enough corpus examples for some EFFs for the given year, so that I had to extract the data from the older sources (programmes), though not older than 2003 (only in case of *I presume*). A more detailed overview of the years in which the corpus data have been recorded is presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Year of record/addition of the corpus data for each EFF extracted from COCA (in per cent), source: COCA

<i>EFFs</i>	<i>Year of record and the number of the extracted sources per year, in per cent</i>
<i>I guess</i>	2012 (100%)
<i>I suppose</i>	2012 (32%) – 2011 (68%)
<i>I assume</i>	2012 (28%) – 2011 (72%)
<i>I presume</i>	2012 (2%) – 2011 (10%), 2010 (12%), 2009 (10%), 2008 (16%), 2007 (2%), 2006 (10%), 2005 (10%), 2004 (18%), 2003 (10%)

Table 3 demonstrates that the corpus data extracted for the most frequent EFF (*I guess*) contain the most recent programmes (i.e. all are taken from 2012), whereas for the less frequent EFF (*I presume*) the programmes are less current, and some were even taken from year 2003. Moreover, in the case of *I presume* it was not only difficult to find enough corpus texts (excerpts) from 2012, but also from the previous years, which means that the corpus data for this EFF contain sources from year 2012 to year 2003, ranging from 2-18 per cent of the number of the sources for each year. As for *I suppose* and *I assume*, they have comparably equal number of corpus ‘excerpts’ extracted from the programmes recorded in years 2012 and 2011, namely 32-28 per cent and 68-72 per cent, respectively.

Overall, the extracted corpus data in this study originate from the most recent transcripts of various American TV and radio programmes. First of all, approximately 80 per cent of all 200 excerpts taken from COCA stem from the programmes that were recorded in 2012 and 2011. Secondly, the corpus data elicited from the corpus for *I guess* are all from 2012. In addition, while extracting the most current data from the corpus, an attempt has been made to select one excerpt per source (programme), which means that the excerpts are from as various sources as possible. Importantly, since the corpus data in this study had been elicited from COCA via its special function “*CLICK FOR MORE CONTEXT*”, it has made it possible to expand the excerpts and thus to analyse ‘more context’ in which EFFs occur.

5.1.3. Delimiting the set of epistemic formulaic fragments

This Subsection is devoted to the EFFs that have been selected for the current study from the variety of existing EFFs. Its main purpose is to clarify the procedure for the delimitation of the set of four EFFs (*I guess*, *I suppose*, *I assume* and *I presume*). Furthermore, it will demonstrate other EFFs and their frequencies in COCA, because the selection of the EFFs is based on the rank order of these frequencies and the relevance of the meaning of different EFFs to the cognitive meaning of “*I think*”.

There is a wide range of different EFFs in English which are difficult to classify. The problems of categorising the EFFs are caused by the diversity of their components and the multiplicity of their functions. In attempt to find a way of dealing with a large number of various EFFs and to be able to conduct my research, I have used a categorisation proposed by Brinton (2008) as a starting point. It is based on the classification introduced by Quirk et al. (1985), but Brinton’s categorisation has one additional type, namely imperative form. Brinton (2008: 22-23) divides EFFs (‘comment clauses’) into three types, viz. the first-person forms (e.g. *I say/daresay, I gather*), the second-person forms (e.g. *you see, you say*), the third-person form (e.g. *that is (to say)*), as well as those resembling matrix clauses with a transitive verb or

adjective (e.g. *as you see/say, as it were*), and nominal relative clauses (e.g. *what's more, what else*). Moreover, Brinton (2008: 23) also incorporates the second-person imperative form (e.g. *say, see*). However, due to study limitations, it would not be possible to analyse all the types of the above classification of EFFs, and thus, it had to be narrowed down to the only one subclass, namely the first-person forms.

As already mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, this study is focused exclusively on the first type of EFFs, namely those phrases which consist of the first-person singular pronoun and a cognitive verb. Though demarcated from the other types, this subclass is represented by a number of different phrases, because the verbs of cognition, with the help of which they are formed, are diverse and “unique in [their] wealth” (Wierzbicka 2006: 206). For this reason, further steps towards the delimitation of the first type of EFFs were necessary. First of all, those cognitive verbs which were most closely related to each other in meaning were selected (cognitive meaning of “*I think*”). At the same time, it was important to sort out these verbs from those ones which tended to have ‘double’ meanings in order to avoid ambiguity (cf. the verb *to find* – to have an opinion/feeling about something vs. *to find* – to discover something/somebody). Such limitation on the number of the cognitive verbs was also placed to be able to make the process of the extraction of the corpus data not only reliable, but also easy and less time-consuming, i.e. to avoid searching for the differences in meanings of one and the same EFF (e.g. *I find*) in thousands of corpus excerpts. In addition, as marked in the previous Subsections, the first-person-singular+cognitive verbs phrases (cf. CTP-phrases) have been restricted to those phrases that are used without *that*-complementiser. Only these phrases with *zero*-complementiser have been treated as ‘prototypical’ EFFs in this study. (For a more detailed discussion on other limitations and exceptions of the study see Subsection 5.4).

The procedure of the delimitation of the set of EFFs in this study is divided into two main stages which are presented in Table 4a and Table 4b. The results of the first stage of the process of this delimitation of EFFs are given in Table 4a below.¹

Table 4a: Delimitation of the set of EFFs I: Frequencies of CTP-phrases and EFFs in COCA (spoken part), incl. the percentage of EFFs of the total frequency of their corresponding CTP-phrases.

<i>CTP-phrase</i>	<i>Overall frequency of a CTP-phrase (i.e. with and without that-complementiser)</i>	<i>Overall frequency of a CTP-phrase (i.e. with that-complementiser)</i>	<i>Overall frequency of an EFF (i.e. without that-complementiser) + manual filtering of some CTP-phrase-combinations! See Footnote¹ below</i>	<i>Percentage of an EFF of the total frequency of its corresponding CTP-phrase</i>
I think	256,186	30,649	219,797	85.8 %
I mean	92,758	341	92,169	99.4 %
I know	34,526	4,961	27,413	79.4 %
I guess	22,215	516	21,434	96.5 %
I believe	15,390	3,891	10,391	67.5 %
I feel*	8,968	1,150	6,381	71.1 %
I understand	7,943	1,736	6,145	77.4 %
I find*	2,660	407	2,101	79.0 %
I suppose	2,382	136	2,208	92.7 %
I suspect*	1,594	443	1,143	71.7 %
I assume	1,205	247	952	79.0 %
I gather*	907	114	763	84.1 %
I presume	247	48	194	78.5 %
I reckon	25	6	21	84.0%

¹Table 4a excludes the cases of:

CTP-phrase + *that* acting as an object (e.g. *I presume **that**'s the answer*); these cases have been filtered manually
CTP-phrase + *about* but only in the cases of *I think*, *I mean*, *I know*, *I guess*, *I believe*, *I feel*, *I understand*, *I find*; other combinations of CTP-phrase + *about* have not been excluded, since *about* in these combinations acted predominantly as a modifier of a numeral/numerical expression (e.g. *I guess about 70 people or so*) or they have not been found in the corpus data (e.g. *I suspect/presume/reckon + **about***)

CTP-phrase + *so* (however the cases of *I gather*, *I reckon + **so*** have not been counted, since these combinations have not been found in the corpus data) (cf. cases of *I feel/find+so+adj/adv*; see explanation in the thesis)

As well as special cases, e.g. *I feel like*, *I mean yes*, etc. (see explanation in the thesis)

Table 4a includes the cases of:

CTP-phrase + *different prepositions* (except for CTP-phrase + *about* (see above!), *I know of*, *I believe in*, *I gather/understand from*, *I mean + by*, etc.) because it would be extremely time-consuming to analyse all the cases where CTP-phrases are followed by various prepositions

CTP-phrases presented in Table 4a **include** initial, medial and final instances of EFFs, which means that the overall number of the instances of EFFs followed by *zero-complementiser* might be different if taking into account only initial ones (medial and final EFFs + *that-complementiser* are not possible) (cf. Subsection 6.1).

Note that “CTP-phrase” in Table4a and in the thesis denotes initial, medial and final positions of EFFs, despite the fact that Thompson (2010: 143) uses the term “parenthetical” for medial and final ones. But in order to avoid using another (separate) term for medial and final EFFs, I use CTP-phrase to describe all initially, medially and finally positioned 1-person-singular+cognitive verbs phrases that are used with and without *that-complementiser*.

It should also be noted that despite the detailed (manual) filtering of the corpus data, Table 4a may contain inaccurate figures and mistakes, or include CTP-phrases which cannot be regarded as EFFs.

In the **first column** of Table 4a I have listed all possible CTP-phrases (namely, only combinations of the first person singular pronoun with cognitive verbs), and placed an asterisk (*) next to the phrases which may potentially have an ambiguous meaning, as explained previously in the case of *I find*. These marked CTP-phrases, viz. *I feel*, *I find*, *I suspect* and *I gather*, will be later excluded from the list, but now they should serve for a general overview of EFFs (cf. Table 4b). As for the **second column** of Table 4a (“overall frequencies of a CTP-phrase (i.e. with and without *that*-complementiser)”), it gives the frequencies of different CTP-phrases with and without *that*-complementiser which have been found in COCA (i.e. frequencies which have been received after searching for each CTP-phrase in COCA, e.g. by entering [*I think*]). The findings show that the most frequent CTP-phrase is *I think*, occurring 256,186 times in the spoken part of COCA, whereas the least frequent – is *I reckon* (25 instances). This indicates that all the analysed phrases (both with and without *that*-complementiser) are used by the American English speakers with a certain frequency.

Following “a cautious approach” proposed by Kaltenböck (2010: 247) in this thesis, I regard only those phrases that are followed by *zero*-complementiser as EFFs and, thus, it was necessary to retrieve only these phrases for the analysis carried in the present study. But before going so, it was also important to filter out CTP-phrases with *that*-complementiser. While sorting out CTP-phrases with *that*-complementiser from those without it, I have excluded all the cases of CTP-phrase followed by *that*, where it acted as an object (e.g. *I reckon that was it*). Often these cases have been filtered manually, especially when the frequency of CTP-phrase was not too high (e.g. in case of *I reckon*), or by searching for strings e.g. [*I presume that 's*] in case of *I presume*) (Note that it is important to enter [*that*] and [*'s*] as two separate words (by pressing the space bar) in order to search for the given string in COCA) (cf. footnote¹). The results of this process of sorting out of the CTP-phrases with *that*-complementiser from those with *zero*-complementiser are given in the **third column** of Table 4a. In addition, it should be noted that there is one special case when *that* (though acting as an object) used after CTP-phrase has not been included in Table 4a: *I find that + adjective*. It occurs 75 times in the spoken part of COCA, e.g. *I find that hard/fascinating/offensive*, etc. After 75 such cases have been subtracted from 488 instances of *I find that* (excluding 6 cases of *I find that's*), 407 have been inserted into the third column of Table 4a; since construction *I find that + adjective* cannot be regarded as an EFF.

Having the frequencies of the CTP-phrases with *that*-complementiser, I have started to single out EFFs (i.e. without *that*-complementiser) for the analysis in the present study.

However, it would be not enough only to subtract the results in the third one (CTP-phrases with *that*-complementiser) from those in the second column (CTP-phrases with and without *that*-complementiser), because there exists a number of other combinations of CTP-phrases which should be excluded from the overall frequency of EFFs. The findings of the process of sorting out of the CTP-phrases followed by *zero*-complementiser from those used with *that*-complementiser and the manual procedure of filtering out certain CTP-phrase-combinations (footnote¹), are given in the **fourth column** of Table 4a. Though the majority of the excluded CTP-phrase-combinations are listed in footnote¹, it is necessary to present some additional explanations and special cases excluded from Table 4a.

First, apart from other manually filtered data, phrases like *I know* + *so* (41 instances overall) have also been sorted out manually. For example, corpus excerpts “*I know so.*” or “*How do I know so much.*” have been excluded from the fourth column in Table 4a (19 instances out of a total of 34,526); but cases e.g. “*I know so many people have watched your show...*” have been included in it (22 instances out of a total of 34,526).

Secondly, as stated in footnote,¹ CTP-phrases followed by *about* (with the exceptions of *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I suspect*, *I assume*, *I gather*, *I presume*, *I reckon*) have been excluded from the overall frequency of EFFs (in the fourth column, Table 4a). Some of these have also been sorted out manually, e.g. *I believe* + *about* occurs 14 times of a total of 15,390 instances of *I believe*. However, in 7 cases *about* acts as an adverb, used as a modifier, e.g. of a numerical expression: „*I believe about six years ago, it was \$ 15 million*“. Thus, only these 7 cases of *I believe* + *about* have been included in the fourth column in Table 4a. (Note that in case of *I guess* in all 75 instances (with the exception of 6 instances) of this CTP-phrase + *about* (of a total of 22,215) *about* was used as a modifier of a numeral/numerical expression; thus, only 6 instances have been excluded from the overall frequency of EFFs).

Thirdly, though most CTP-phrase followed by different prepositions (except for CTP-phrase + *about* (see other exclusions in footnote¹) have not been considered in the fourth column of Table 4a, some of them have nevertheless been taken into account, at least those, the frequency of occurrence of which has been relative high if compared with the other combinations of CTP-phrase with other prepositions. These include such phrases as *I mean* + *by* (171 instances), *I know of* (575 instances), *I believe in* (920 instances), *I gather from* (30 instances), *I understand from* (50 instances). Moreover, since apart from the meaning “to have opinion/feeling” *I find* may also mean “to discover somebody/something” (http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/find_1?q=find, 21 February 2015), all cases of *I find* + *in/with* have been excluded from the calculations in the fourth column in Table 4a

(i.e. 22 instances (+*in*) and 10 instances (+*with*) of a total of 2,660). Other possible combinations of CTP-phrase with different prepositions have not been taken into consideration for the calculation of the overall frequency of EFFs in the given corpus data, since it would be extremely time-consuming to sort out all the cases where CTP-phrases are followed by various prepositions, i.e. filtering hundreds of cases where a preposition is a part of a prepositional phrase/adverb, a modifier of a numerical expression, etc.

Fourthly, some CTP-phrases followed by adverbs, e.g. *I know* + *how/where/when/why* (678/181/161/122 instances), *I mean* + *when/how* (124/78 instances) have also been excluded from the fourth column of Table 4a, since they cannot be regarded EFFs (seem to be relatively fixed combinations/phrases). Interestingly, that combination *I know* + (*exactly*) followed by different adverbs has been found in COCA and has also been excluded from the overall frequency of EFFs for the same reasons (145 instances of a total of 34,526). (Note that other combinations of CTP-phrase + adverbs, e.g. *how/when*, especially *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I assume* and *I presume* are included in the fourth column of Table 4a, since their frequency was very low, e.g. *I presume* + *when* occurs only 12 times out of a total of 2,382)

In addition, there are several special cases of CTP-phrases which have been sorted out from the overall frequency of EFFs. For instance, *I feel like* have been found in the spoken part of COCA 1,048 times of a total of 8,968 of CTP-phrase *I feel*. Since this phrase seems to be a set phrase with a quite different meaning (“*to want to have/do something*” vs. cognitive meaning, i.e. *to think*), it cannot be regarded as an EFF according to the definition used in this study. That is why, the combinations *I feel* + *like* have been excluded from the fourth column of Table 4a. For the same reason, *I feel+so+adjective/adverb* (222 instances out of a total of 8,968), *I find+so+adjective/adverb* (30 instances out of a total of 2,660), as well as the case of *I find out* (87 instance out of a total of 2,660 of CTP-phrase *I find*) have also been excluded from the fourth column of Table 4a. Besides, the cases of *I mean* + *yes* (5 instances) have also been excluded from the overall frequency of EFFs (the fourth column of Table 4a).

Next, it has been necessary to analyse these results in percentage terms. For this reason, the amount of instances of EFFs (i.e. used without *that*-complementiser) (incl. combinations of certain CTP-phrases manually filtered out from the overall frequency of EFFs) has been calculated with regard to the overall frequency of the corresponding CTP-phrases, and presented in the **fifth column** of Table 4a (in percent, rounded off to the first decimal). Interestingly, that at this point one can easily see that *I think* (if treated as an EFF, i.e. without *that*-complementiser, and excluding CTP-phrase-combinations mentioned above) occurs 219,797 times, which constitutes 85.8 per cent of overall 256,186 (100 per cent)

instances of it (as a CTP-phrase) in COCA. So, according to this method of calculation, it remains the most frequent phrase in the corpus, but if compared to other EFFs (e.g. *I guess* 96.5 per cent), it is used less often without than with *that*-complementiser. In other words, such computation has made it possible to trace the ‘prototypical’ EFFs, i.e. those phrases which are used with *zero*-complementiser much more frequently than with *that*-complementiser (cf. discussion in Subsection 6.1; footnote¹).

Finally, percentages of EFFs from the last column of Table 4a have been ranked in descending order for a better overview. Moreover, as mentioned above, the marked EFFs which may be ambiguous have also been excluded from the list. The results of this second final stage of the delimitation procedure are presented in Table 4b below:

Table 4b: Delimitation of the set of EFFs II: EFFs in COCA (spoken part) ranked in descending order, according to the percentage of EFFs of the total frequency of their corresponding CTP-phrases

<i>EFFs</i>	<i>Percentage of an EFF of the total frequency of its corresponding CTP-phrase</i>
I mean	99.4 %
I guess	96.5 %
I suppose	92.7 %
I think	85.8 %
I reckon	84.0 %
I know	79.4 %
I assume	79.0 %
I presume	78.5 %
I understand	77.4 %
I believe	67.5 %

According to Table 4b above, the ‘most prototypical’ EFF is *I mean*, constituting 99.4 per cent or 92,417 instances of total 92,758. This means that *I mean* is used by the speakers without *that*-complementiser extremely often. (It should be noted though that the calculated frequencies of EFFs used without *that*-complementiser should be treated with caution and may include cases of EFFs used with *that*-complementiser or medial and final instances). (cf. Subsection 6.1) The results also show that *I believe* is used significantly less frequently without *that*-complementiser than all the other EFFs from the given list (67.5 per cent). However, in order to choose four EFFs for this study it would not be enough to take only first four phrases from the list in Table 4b. First of all, I had to exclude *I think* from my set of EFFs, since it had been investigated thoroughly in previous studies, and I was interested in ‘less’ investigated EFFs. Secondly, after keeping the given EFFs under close scrutiny, it was

obvious that some of them have a slightly different meaning, which differs from the cognitive meaning of “*I think*”. It is important to remember that this study is devoted exclusively to the EFFs which contain verbs of cognition meaning “to have a particular idea or opinion about something/somebody” (<http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/think>, 20 August 2013), i.e. *to think*. Therefore, since such verbs as *mean*, *know*, *understand* and *believe* mean slightly different cognitive processes (e.g. have an information in one’s mind, intend to say something, know or realize the meaning of words, etc.), they have been excluded from my set of EFFs. Thirdly, *I reckon* could not be included in my list due to the fact that there are only 21 instances of this EFF in the spoken part of COCA, which would be not enough to conduct my research (I needed minimum 50 excerpts for each EFF for the analysis). Finally, the remaining EFFs from Table 4b have been selected to be analysed in this study, namely the following four (highlighted in bold type in Table 4b): ***I guess***, ***I suppose***, ***I assume*** and ***I presume***. To my mind, they are the most closely related to each other in their meaning of a ‘thinking process’, and may be considered as the most ‘true’ EFFs. Now, they will be shortly overviewed in the next paragraph.

I guess is one of the ‘most prototypical’ EFFs in the spoken part of COCA, constituting 96.5 per cent, i.e. 21,440 instances of a total of 22,215 (preceded by *I mean* with 99.4 per cent). As for the second EFF, selected for the analysis in this study – *I suppose*, it is used by the American speakers 2,208 times out of the total of 2,382 (CTP-phrases). This means that 92.7 per cent of all instances of this EFF occur without *that*-complementiser. Importantly, both these EFFs constitute almost more than 90 per cent of the total *I guess* and *I suppose* in COCA. These results demonstrate that they tend to appear as EFFs much more often than *I assume* and *I presume*, which occur 952 times out of the total of 1,205 times (or 79 per cent), and 194 times out of the total of 247 times (or 78.5 per cent), respectively. Apparently, the overall lower frequency of the given EFFs has brought about the tendency for these EFFs to be used more infrequently with than without *that*-complementiser. But nevertheless, *I assume* and *I presume* are followed by *that*-complementiser only in about 20 per cent of all cases where these phrases appear. All in all, this predominance of EFFs used with *zero*-complementiser over those used with *that*-complementiser corroborates the findings of the previous studies (cf. Thompson & Mulac 1991), according to which the former ones have “an overwhelmingly higher frequency” (Wierzbicka 2007: 37).

To conclude, with the help of the above process of delimitation of EFFs it was possible to single out four EFFs, namely *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I assume* and *I presume*. The entire procedure of narrowing down the existing EFFs has been based on the rank order of the

frequencies of EFFs (i.e. on the number of instances of the ‘prototypical’ EFFs) and on the relevance of the meaning of different EFFs to the cognitive meaning of “*I think*” (i.e. only those EFFs have been selected, verbs of cognition of which are most closely related to the meaning of the verb *to think*). The set of the four selected EFFs will be thoroughly analysed in this study in order to investigate their use and functions in American conversations.

5.2. Method

This Section briefly discusses the methods of examining the four selected EFFs in the current thesis.

As pointed out above, a corpus-based method has been applied in this study. It should be noted that researchers may profit from the use of corpora in various ways. On the one hand, making a corpus the basis for analysis allows linguists “to look in detail at recurring patterns of use within corpora and how they relate to the context in which they are used” (Clark 2007: 82). It is this advantage of the implementation of corpus data that has played a major role in choosing a corpus-based analysis as a method of investigating EFFs in the current study. On the other hand, what has also influenced my decision to carry out this usage-based investigation, is the possibility “to gain information on the actual frequency in the language of a given linguistic feature, its full range of behaviour, and its relations with other features” (Knowles 1996: 6). Taking into account that I am interested in the exploration of the frequently used EFFs, their use and functions in conversational discourse, their co-occurring linguistic devices and the context they occur in, using corpus data seems to be one of the most practical and suitable ways to investigate these features in my research. Moreover, “corpora are excellent sources for verifying the completeness, simplicity, strength, and objectivity of any linguistic hypothesis” (Meyer 2002: 4, in Leech 1992: 112-113). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, corpora “more than any other source of data, reflect ‘usage’” (Newman 2011: 521). The above overview of the advantages of the implementation of the corpus makes it clear that the corpus-based analysis that will be carried out on EFFs in this study is an effective method for the examination of the use of the phrases under consideration, as well as for answering research questions.

It is important to remember, that due to study limitations in the current thesis 200 instances (the most recent excerpts elicited from COCA) of such EFFs as *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I presume* and *I assume*, i.e. 50 instances of each EFF, will be examined with respect to certain parameters, the way of coding of which is presented in the next Subsection (cf. Subsection 5.1.2 and Subsection 5.1.3 devoted to the extracted corpus data and the process of the

delimitation of EFFs, as well as Table 3 for an overview of the years in which the selected corpus data have been recorded).

5.3. Coding of conversational data

The purpose of this Subsection is to outline the coding schema that has been elaborated in order to study linguistic, semantic-pragmatic and syntactic features of EFFs. The consideration of the positional patterns, exact points of insertion, scope, co-occurring elements (i.e. preceding linguistic units), as well as communicative and interactional functions of EFFs are essential for the investigation of the use of EFFs in conversational discourse. For this reason, a specially designed coding system has been developed in order to code these parameters. They will be described in the Sub-Subsections 5.3.1-5.3.5 in more detail.

5.3.1. Initial, medial and final positions of EFFs

As already discussed in Section 4, EFFs may occur in the initial, medial and final position within the clause. This Subsection is aimed at demonstrating and explaining which cases of EFFs having these different positions have been coded. In addition, some examples of the positions of EFFs will be provided in order to illustrate the coding process.

While talking about the initial occurrences of the analysed EFF (viz. *I think*), Kärkkäinen (2003: 173) notes that it is “often preceded by discourse markers like *well, you know, but* or *cause*, or items like *yeah*”. For Kärkkäinen (2003: 55) EFFs that are “preceded by a connective like *and, but, or, so, well* or *I mean* (as defined by Chafe 1988)” belong to those occurring in the initial position. As a result of these findings, I will also include the cases where EFFs are preceded by these linguistic elements into this category. More precisely, I regard EFFs as initial ones when they are preceded by the above-mentioned connectives/discourse markers and when there is no turn/clause before the linguistic elements such as *and, but, because*, etc., i.e. they are located at the beginning of the turn. The following cases have been coded as initial (4a-d):

- (4a) ***I guess*** I did something wrong (COCA: ABC_PrimeTime-4)
- (4b) I mean, ***I suppose*** there's some significance that you're leading in both those states (COCA: Fox_Susteren-13)
- (4c) And ***I assume*** you're as disappointed as everybody else, or feel as bad as everybody else (COCA: Fox_Susteren-8)
- (4d) Because ***I presume*** these ions that are blowing off from the sun, they're not all identical to one another (COCA: NPR_Science-61)

It should be noted that the cases where EFFs are preceded by an adjunct (e.g. prepositional phrase) have also been coded as initial (4e) (cf. Kaltenböck 2010: 271 ‘prenuclear position’, viz. after adjunct and before subject):

- (4e) And with a rule like that, **I guess** it was worth crying over spilled milk (COCA: CBS_ThisMorning-16)

In addition, a few special cases of EFFs have been coded as initial, i.e. *clause # (no coordinating /subordinate conjunction) clause*, since in these text excerpts EFFs have been preceded by another clause which, however, no connectives/discourse markers have been inserted before EFFs (cf. discussion above) (4f):

- (4f) When my 13-year-old calls me, it's an emergency on the road, **I presume** there's a Jimmy Choo sale, okay? (COCA: ABC-ThisWeek-1)

As can be seen from the examples above, one may always insert a *that*-complementiser after these initial EFFs (cf. Simon-Vandenberg 2000: 49). This has also served as a criterion for the determination of EFFs in this position.

Finally, the cases when EFFs are preceded by an incomplete structure and a pause (marked with “--”) or vocatives have been treated likewise as initial EFFs, as in the examples below (4g and 4h):

- (4g) You know, everyone -- **I guess** everyone would know something about it points to that moment (COCA: NPS_FreshAir-29)
(4h) Mary Mapes, **I presume** you disagree with that (COCA: CNN_Reliable-55)

In contrast to the clause-initial EFFs, clause-medial EFFs may not be followed by *that*-complementiser. They are mainly positioned within a verb phrase, with such points of insertions as, for example, between subject and verb phrase (auxiliary+main verb), as in 5a; or between auxiliary verb and main verb, as in 5b, etc.

- (5a) Sometimes girl schools, **I suppose**, can be a little bit bitchy (COCA: NBC_Dateline-45)
(5b) And she's, **I assume**, going to need help (COCA: Fox_Susteren-32)

Moreover, medial EFFs are often positioned in clause structures, viz. subordinate or coordinate clausal constructions. Thus, those EFFs that occur in subordinate clauses have been coded as medial: e.g. after relative element and before relative clause (5c); between the main and subordinate clause, more precisely, after the subordinator in adverbial/noun clauses (e.g. 5d). Note that those EFFs which were used before the subordinator have been coded as final (positioned between a verb phrase and an adverb in the form of a clause) (See 6c below).

- (5c) The rest are owned by you, Mr. Slocum, who **I assume** has a retirement plan, a 401(k), an IRA (COCA: PBS_NewsHour-54)
- (5d) But she invited her over and I felt that, you know, **I guess** that's an opportunity to give her some insight.

Similarly, EFFs positioned within a coordinate clause have been treated as medial EFFs. However, this has been applied only in the cases when EFFs have appeared immediately after a coordinating conjunction (e.g. *but*, *so*); and which have been preceded by another clause (or turn) as in 5e, i.e. a coordinating conjunction have been used to connect one clause with another one (vs. initial EFFs preceded by the same linguistic elements, but before which no turn/clause is used, i.e. located at the beginning of the turn as in 4c and 4d). The cases of EFFs used before a coordinating or subordinating conjunction have been interpreted as final (cf. Kaltenböck 2010: 271, Table 10.A1., C).

- (5e) I've not heard from General Casey or a direct report, but **I presume** the plan is probably accurate in the report in The New York Times this morning (COCA: CBS_FaceNation-44)

As for final EFFs, they have been coded as such in all cases where EFFs appeared at the end position of the clause (6a). Moreover, as mentioned above in the case of medial EFFs occurring within or between clauses, the EFFs located before the coordinator or subordinator, have been regarded as final, as in 6b and 6c (cf. Kaltenböck 2010: 271). However, it should be noted that in only one case an EFF occurring before the coordinating conjunction *or* has been marked as medial (not final), because of its semantic meaning, viz. introducing an alternative/additional information, and because the following linguistic element (noun phrase) is closely related to the preceding one (noun phrase, nominal), as in example 6d below.

- (6a) And listen, it's a different strokes for different folks, **I suppose** (COCA: NBC_Today: 12)
- (6b) This is Laffer's point, **I suppose**, but again, this is all speculative (COCA: Fox_Baier-44)
- (6c) He violated his principles, **I guess**, because he's for bailouts, and, and denied a bailout for, for Detroit (COCA: NBC: MeetPress-39)
- (6d) Something that Child Services, **I guess**, or your family's attorney didn't even know about at the time when these children were given permission to go into that home (COCA: CNN_Velez-56) (EXCEPTION)

Interestingly, in one case of an interrogative clause, where a final EFF (though followed by *right*), have been nevertheless coded as final (6e), representing a very rare case of this special use of final EFFs.

- (6e) This has never happened before **I presume**, right? (COCA: CBS_Early-23)

Lastly, as mentioned in Subsection 3.6, apart from initial, medial and final positions of EFFs, there are EFFs which occur as ‘separate units’. These might be the cases when EFFs seem to be used as a separate unit (7a), or as a ‘truncated intonation units’ (7b), i.e. separated by double hyphen (cf. Du Bois et al. 1993: 18).

(7a) Let's shift to Iran - because that is still going to be - ***I presume*** - do you agree, Richard, a big issue for the US administration? (COCA: ABC_ThisWeek-8)

(7b) ***I assume*** – (CROSSTALK) (COCA: CNN_Velez-5)

However, since the determination of such cases (i.e. ‘separate IUs’, Kärkkäinen 2003: 157) is quite problematic and the selected corpus data do not allow to find the difference between the cases when EFFs are used turn-initially/medially/finally and when they occur in interactional environments as “online-planning”, I will code them (overall only 4 cases) according to the aforementioned criteria, i.e. as initial (as 7b), medial (as 7a) or final EFFs.

In conclusion, the main positions of EFFs such as initial, medial and final, have been coded and determined as explained in the current Subsection. Four cases of EFFs which could be (theoretically) treated as ‘separate’ EFFs have not been taken into account in the current thesis and have been coded as initial/medial/final EFFs due to their quite problematic identification as ‘separate units’ in the given corpus data. All positional patterns found in the corpus data in this study will be presented in more detail in Section 6, where the results will also be briefly discussed and illustrated with the respective examples.

5.3.2. Exact points of insertion of EFFs

Apart from the positional patterns discussed in the previous Subsection, it was also necessary to indicate the exact syntactic positions of EFFs, i.e. points of insertions. This Subsection presents some points of insertion of EFFs which have been coded in the corpus data of the present study. In addition, there will also provide several examples to best clarify the way of coding the exact syntactic positions of EFFs.

It should be noted that these points of insertion were mostly coded in the cases of medial EFFs. But, some points of insertion of the initial EFFs were also coded. Following Kaltenböck’s (2010: 271) way of coding of the points of insertion of EFFs (‘parenthetical’ *I think*), I have marked these exact syntactic positions of EFFs as ‘#’. For example, in the case of initial EFFs, such points of insertion have been coded as *adjunct # subject* (8a).

(8a) And then ***I presume*** she got the house (COCA: NBC_Dateline-11)

Several points of insertion of medial EFFs are presented in the examples below, where the points of insertion of EFFs are as follows: *main verb # non-clausal complementation* (8b), *particle to # internal complement of the verb (verb in infinitive form)* (8c), *subject (finite clause) # verb phrase (copula)* (8d), and *copula # adjective phrase complement ('within a verb phrase')* (8e).

- (8b) This is -- she's, **I guess**, the waitress, or... (COCA: NBC_Today-36)
- (8c) I mean - they're, they're entitled to, **I suppose**, interpret stuff as they must (COCA: ABC_GMA-34)
- (8d) It's just - it's - I mean, everything we do as individuals, **I suppose**, is a kind of group effort, in a way (COCA: NPR_Science-75)
- (8e) They're not, **I assume**, monolithic (COCA: PBS_Newshour-9)

The identification of the exact syntactic positions of EFFs is important for the investigation of the use of EFFs in conversational discourse since it helps understand in which way the speakers of American English integrate these phrases into their conversations. The results of my examination of the exact points of insertions of EFFs in the given corpus data will be presented in Subsection 6.3.

5.3.3. Semantic-pragmatic scope of EFFs

Apart from the determination of the positions of EFFs (cf. Subsections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2), it was also necessary to code two types of the scope of EFFs, either clausal, i.e. over a clausal construction, or phrasal, i.e. over non-clausal constituent. This Subsection overviews these types of the semantic-pragmatic scope of EFFs.

Some examples of EFFs' clausal (9a) and phrasal scope (9b) which have been coded in this study are given below:

- (9a) So, **I guess** I'll do a better screening process than I would have before (COCA: ABC_PrimeTime-27)
- (9b) The additional dollars will flow in part, I think, from additional federal dollars **I presume** in the 2004 budget and beyond (COCA: CNN_Dobbs-74)

As already mentioned in Section 4, the results of the previous studies show that typical points of insertion of EFFs having a phrasal scope are between a preposition and its noun phrase (NP) complement, a NP head and its pre-head dependent (determiner/adjective), within a noun phrase or prepositional phrase, as well as linked to "elliptical or incomplete hosts" (Kaltenböck 2010: 251) (cf. Table 10.A.2, Kaltenböck 2010: 272), or "clause fragments" (Kärkkäinen 2010: 211). It remains to be seen whether these findings correlate with the results

of the current study, but there is no doubt that the results of the present analysis will contribute to the variety of the potential points of insertion of EFFs having phrasal scope, which in turn, may show their growing positional mobility. Specific cases of phrasal scope found in the given corpus data will be described in more detail in Subsection 6.3.2.

5.3.4. Preceding linguistic units/collocations

In addition to the positions and scope of EFFs it was also necessary to identify and code the co-occurring linguistic elements. Since the current thesis is focused on the use of EFFs in conversational discourse, it will be interesting to find out what linguistic elements may be used by the American English speakers before EFFs. In this Subsection a few examples of such preceding linguistic units will be provided, the detailed overview of which will be presented in Section 6, namely in Table 9, Subsection 6.6.

As mentioned previously, initial EFFs are often preceded by other linguistic elements, such as discourse markers or connectives (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 55, 173). In this study I have tried to analyse these elements, because they may demonstrate how EFFs are used, more precisely, how the speakers of American English combine them with other linguistic elements.

Codings as ‘*other*’ EFFs (e.g. *I think, I mean*), ‘*connectives*’ (e.g. *so, but, etc.*), and ‘*multiple elements*’ (e.g. combination of connectives and other EFFs, as in 10a) were mainly used in order to indicate the preceding co-occurring elements of EFFs in the corpus data. Linguistic elements like *yeah, okay* have been coded as special cases with the indication of the element itself (cf. co-occurring disfluency markers in Table 8). In addition, in the rare cases like in 10b, where *I guess* is preceded by the element used to single out the addressee of a message, i.e. vocative (“Kids”), these preceding elements have been coded as ‘*vocatives*’.

(10a) And, you know, ***I guess*** sounds like a car, but obviously, a crucial part of the nuclear power equation and a nuclear rod, a big development for Iran (COCA: CNN_JohnKing-57)

(10b) Where the father – ‘Kids, ***I guess*** you’ve been wondering why your mother and I, you know, called you in today (COCA: NBC_Today-10)

It should be noted that only initial EFFs are analysed for the presence of a preceding linguistic element. The co-occurring elements of medial, final EFFs and the linguistic elements that follow EFFs are not taken into consideration in this study, except for some disfluency markers (cf. Table 8).

5.3.5. Additional codings (clause adverbials, occurrences in interrogative clauses)

Apart from the aforementioned linguistic and syntactic features, several additional features of the use of EFFs have also been coded and identified in this study. These include clause adverbials which are positioned within the sentence where EFFs are used, and which indicate certain epistemicity or uncertainty (e.g. *probably*) (cf. 11a). Moreover, several occurrences of EFFs in interrogative clauses have also been identified and coded accordingly (11b).

- (11a) And ***I guess*** if Viola Davis is going to get beaten by anybody it should be probably the finest actor in the country (COCA: NBC_Today-37)
- (11b) But ordinarily, at this point in the game, you'd be rooting for whoever, you know, whoever is, you know, furthest away, ***I suppose***?

Overall, the aforementioned extra codings are used in this study to single out interesting co-occurring linguistic units and the occurrence of EFFs in interrogative clauses, which will be taken into account during the analysis of EFFs in the corpus data.

5.4. Exclusions and limitations of the study

This Subsection is a brief overview of the linguistic items which have been excluded from the current research. It will also outline the limitations of the study.

As a result of the delimitation of the EFFs (cf. Subsection 5.1.3), a number of phrases have not been taken into consideration in this study. The variety of these phrases makes it difficult to enumerate all of them. Their analysis is beyond the scope of my thesis. For the sake of brevity, I will now focus on the EFFs which are not included into the set of the EFFs analysed in this study.

Such criteria as “the 1st person pronoun and a perception/cognition/utterance verb without *that*”, have been regarded by Kärkkäinen (2003: 41) “as applying to a prototype of epistemic phrase”. Thus, first of all, the *first-person singular pronoun + present tense form of cognitive verb* phrases, sorted out from other forms of existing EFFs (cf. Brinton 2008: 22-23), have been limited to those which are followed by *zero-complementiser*. It has already been discussed before that this decision is reasoned by the fact that there is no agreement among different scholars on the status of the given phrases used with or without *that-complementiser*. There is also no “hard and fast evidence for any of the different positions” (Kaltenböck 2008: 87). As a result, the phrases under consideration may be interpreted either as ‘parenthetical’, or both as ‘matrix’ and parenthetical clause. Therefore, this study follows

Kaltenböck's (2008: 87) "cautious approach which tries to filter out all potentially ambiguous cases", i.e. investigates only *first-person singular pronoun + cognitive verb* phrases with *zero-complementiser*. In addition, several frequently used combinations of EFFs and certain linguistic elements (e.g. some prepositions (e.g. *I think + about, I believe + in, I gather + from*), adverbs (e.g. *I guess + so*), as well as EFFs followed by *that* which acts as an object or some fixed expressions (e.g. *I feel like*) have been excluded from the calculations of the overall frequency of EFFs (See a detailed description of other exclusions in Subsection 5.1.3 and footnote¹).

Secondly, due to research limitations, I have selected only EFFs of positive polarity, i.e. an affirmative form. Thus, the forms of negation of EFFs, such as *I don't guess, I don't suggest*, have been excluded from the selected EFFs. It should also be mentioned that the current investigation is restricted to the analysis of EFFs having a form of the finite indicative clause, thus, all non-finite forms of EFFs will not be included in the set of EFFs of this study.

Thirdly, all possible 'elliptical' forms without the first EFF-component *I* have been likewise disregarded, as it would require too much manual work and analysing of thousands of corpus text excerpts. In addition, sentences such as, *I guess, not* (COCA: CBS_ThisMorning-18) or *Yes, I suppose* (COCA: NBC_Matthews-5) have not been extracted from COCA, since these sentences (mainly responses) are incomplete, i.e. contain ellipsis.

Fourthly, this study takes into account only the present tense form of EFFs, i.e. other tense forms of EFFs are beyond the current study (cf. the tendency of the past tense of *I think* in Wierzbicka 2006, Van Bogaert 2010, etc).

Apart from the types and forms of the linguistic units that have not been analysed in this investigation, it is also necessary to present the limitations of the study. They have already been partially touched upon while describing the corpus referred to (COCA) (cf. Section 5.1.1). Since COCA does not offer the analysis of prosodic contours and phonetic cues of EFFs, prosodic features or intonation units of the EFFs have not been examined in the extracted corpus data. As a result, this study does not consider possible prosodic binding of EFFs to the right or left, which may point to the presence of the phrasal scope (Kaltenböck 2010: 251). This means that "prosodic integration of [an EFF] with the material on its right" will be taken as a kind of 'standard' indicator of its "association with a phrasal constituent", because of its less frequent left-binding (ibid.), i.e. "prevalence of a forward-looking scope over scope pointing back" (Kärkkäinen 2010: 209).

Importantly, this thesis, aimed at investigating the use of EFFs in conversational discourse, takes predominantly formal features into account for the analysis of EFFs in the

corpus data, such as syntactic position or preceding linguistic items, and at the same time, allowing for other important dimensions, e.g. semantic-pragmatic scope. Moreover, an attempt will be made to analyse the functions of EFFs which they perform in American English conversations. This also means that I will concentrate on the American variant of the English language, rather than conduct a cross-linguistic study. The analysis of a wide range of various EFFs in British English and other languages is outside the scope of the present study and requires much further research. Finally, due to space and corpus limitations this thesis is confined to the extracted conversational corpus data, the most current text excerpts of which stem from the American English conversations recorded in 2012.

6. Results

Section 6 reports the results of the analysis of the use and functions of EFFs in the spoken American English discourse. It provides evidence for the existence of the characteristics of EFFs as formulaic phrases, as discussed in Subsection 2.2. The findings displayed in this Section also reveal how the four selected EFFs are used and how they function in conversational discourse and can thus help approach the primary research question raised in this study. But in order to be able to answer this question, it is necessary to consider the other important research questions which have been subdivided into those dealing with the quantitative and qualitative data (cf. questions 1 and 2 in Subsection 1.2) and which will be addressed in this Section. The Section concludes with the presentation of the linguistic units which precede EFFs (Subsection 6.6) and other interesting findings, namely, occurrence of EFFs in declarative clauses used to express questions (Subsection 6.7), which will additionally contribute to a better understanding of the use of EFFs in conversational discourse.

6.1. Distributional differences of the analysed EFFs in the spoken part of COCA

This Subsection is aimed at indicating the distributional differences of the four selected EFFs in the spoken part of COCA. It serves as a starting point for the presentation of further findings in this Section. In addition, the predominance of the analysed EFFs in the spoken part of COCA will be presented and briefly discussed. All these outcomes will be concomitantly compared with the results of previous research into EFFs.

To begin with, it should be noted that the overall distribution of all EFFs of the first type, viz. the first-person forms (cf. classification of common clauses, Brinton 2008: 22-23), as well as their corresponding CTP-phrases, i.e. used with *that*-complementiser, has already

been presented in Table 4a, Subsection 5.1.3. The comparison of the distribution of both CTP-phrases and EFFs was necessary during the procedure of the delimitation of the set of the four EFFs. In this Subsection I will refer to these frequency data in order to demonstrate how often the analysed EFFs occur per one million words.

As shown previously in Table 4a, there is a difference in the number of the EFFs and their corresponding CTP-phrases. However, the number of the phrases used with and without *that*-complementiser varies only slightly. This is clear from the percentage of EFFs with respect to the total frequency of their CTP-phrases, ranging from 71.1 per cent (*I feel*) to 99.4 per cent (*I mean*) which, in turn, indicates that the *first-person-singular + cognitive verbs* phrases are used much more frequently with *zero*-complementiser than with *that*-complementiser. A similar phenomenon has been mentioned, though indirectly, by Thompson (2002: 139). She regards phrases that are used as simple CTP-phrases with first-person singular subject (affirmative or negative) and followed by *zero*-complementiser (ibid.) as “formula”. Following Thompson’s (ibid.) explanation, it may be stated that the results of my study provide evidence for the formulaic use of the analysed phrases. This is manifested by the fact that the four EFFs selected for this study, viz. *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I assume* and *I presume*, appear predominantly with no complementiser with regard to their CTP-phrases (i.e. used with *that*-complementiser), i.e. 96.5 per cent, 92.7 per cent, 79 per cent and 78.5 per cent, respectively (cf. Table 4a, Table 4b). My findings are similar to those reported by Thompson (2002: 139), at least as one of the EFFs, namely *I guess*, is concerned, which has also been analysed in her study. When presenting the “percentage of each CTP occurring as a fixed formula” (cf. Table 3, Thompson 2002: 139), Thompson (2002) indicates that *I guess* is used 82 per cent of the time in epistemic formulas, i.e. 14 instances of a total of 17. On the whole, the findings of the given thesis correlate with the results of the previous studies, thereby corroborating evidence for “the tendency [of] the epistemic phrases to be the ones which reduce to formulas” (Thompson 2002: 139) and which do not include *that*-complementiser. Clearly, these are the vivid examples of the characteristic formulaic features of the use of EFFs in discourse.

It should be noted that the percentages above indicate only that according to the calculations made in this study (Subsection 5.1.3) the four EFFs are used more often with *zero*-complementiser than with *that*-complementiser. The number of EFFs followed by *zero*-complementiser (Table 4a and 4b) includes all three positions, viz. initial, medial or final, and therefore, these results should be interpreted with caution, since only initial EFFs should be taken into consideration (medial and final EFFs cannot be followed by *that*-complementiser).

But since it would be extremely time-consuming to filter out all initially positioned EFFs in the spoken part of COCA using my criteria (cf. Subsection 5.3.1), especially frequently used *I guess* (22,215 instances), as well as *I suppose* (2,382 instances), the exact frequencies of the initial instances of only two EFFs, viz. *I assume* and *I presume* has been calculated and are as follows. The overall frequency of *I assume* in COCA is 1,205 (as CTP-phrase), 759 instances of which occur initially, 563 instances of which are used with *zero-complementiser*. In other words, *I assume* is used in COCA in 74.2 per cent of all initial cases without *that-complementiser*. Similarly, *I presume* (overall 247 instances as CTP-phrase), is used in 72 per cent of all cases with *zero-complementiser*, i.e. 64 instances of initial *I presume+zero-complementiser* of a total of 89 initial instances of *I presume*).

The reason why only initial *I assume* and *I presume* have been calculated (manually), and why *I guess* and *I suppose* have only been sorted out without being divided into initial, media or final instances (Table 4a, footnote ¹), lies in the following factors. Firstly, in different frequencies of some of the EFFs (*I guess* with 21,434 instances vs. *I presume*, occurring 247 times in COCA). Secondly, in the resulting extremely time-consuming manual process of sorting out all initial EFFs from the medial and final ones and subsequently the initial ones with *zero-complementiser* from those with *that-complementiser*. Nevertheless, regarding that the least frequent EFFs analysed (*I assume* and *I presume*) appear in the majority of cases without *that-complementiser*, and that over half of all EFFs analysed are positioned initially, it may be assumed that EFFs indeed tend to be followed by *zero-complementiser* rather than by *that-complementiser* (cf. Thompson 2002: 139). The absence of *that-complementiser* points to the distinct feature that characterises the formulaic use of EFFs.

The fact that EFFs tend to become “relatively fixed epistemic formulas” is clearly evident in their frequent use (Thompson 2002: 139). Indeed, this pertains to the cases of the use of *I guess*, since there are about 224 occurrences of this EFF per one million words in the spoken part of COCA (21,434 instances of this EFF (with *zero-complementiser*) of a total of 36,017 (in all sections; without *that-complementiser*), size 95,565,07) (<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>, 14 February 2015). But, this is not the case with the other three EFFs, *I suppose*, *I assume* and *I presume*, which occur only approximately 23, 10 and 2 times per one million words, respectively. There is no need to speculate about the real reasons of such differences in their frequency. In general, the considerably various distributional differences of EFFs are “quite spectacular” (Wierzbicka 2006: 37), the detailed discussion of which is outside the scope of the current study. It should be added that despite the differences between the

frequencies of the first and the other three EFFs, the less frequently used EFFs (*I assume* and *I presume*) are nevertheless used much more frequently without *that*-complementiser than with it. This, again, shows their direct relevance to formulaic expressions, and, at the same time, serves as evidence for their formulaic use, i.e. the lack of *that*-complementiser.

As discussed in the previous Subsections, the “expressions with first person elements are particularly open to performing reflexive and interactive task, uses [of] which contribute to their frequency and routinization in conversational discourse” (Scheibman 2009: 635). Hence, considering that EFFs act as ‘subjective markers of epistemic stance’ in discourse (Kärkkäinen 2003: 20) and are used as “tools for social interaction” (Wray & Perkins 2000:13) it is clear that some of them become highly routinised. Such an entrenchment of the EFFs in certain communicative situations may be traced in the use of EFFs in different types of corpus texts of the sections offered in COCA. For this reason, I have calculated the percentage of the instances of EFFs in the spoken section of COCA with regard to the overall number of all sections of the corpus. The results of this analysis of the four selected EFFs show that all of them (with the exception of *I suppose*) are used predominantly in the spoken section of COCA. *I guess* is the most frequently used EFF in the spoken interaction in COCA. It occurs in 21,434 cases (as EFF) in the spoken part (of a total of 36,017),² constituting 59.5 per cent of all of the other types of the texts offered in COCA such as fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic texts. It is followed by *I assume*, occurring 952 times in the spoken section of a total of 1,821, i.e. 52.3 per cent, as well as by *I presume*, which appears in 194 instances of a total of 483, and thus is used in 40.2 per cent of the other types of the texts. The only exception to this tendency of EFFs to be mostly used in the spoken part of COCA is *I suppose*. It occurs 2,208 times of a total of 8,751 instances, representing only 25.2 per cent in the spoken part out of all sections, since it appears in fiction more frequently, i.e. in 57.3 per cent of all instances of the other sections in COCA (5,015 instances out of a total of 8,751). It is unknown whether this is due to the fact that fiction often includes direct/indirect speech (and thus is very close to spoken language), or due to a random text sample in COCA, or whether *I suppose* is really used less frequently in speech than the other EFFs are. But the purpose of these calculations was not to find the reasons lying behind these differences of the use of EFFs in various sections of COCA (and in general), but to demonstrate that due to the recurrent use of EFFs in certain conversational situations (e.g. American TV shows) they have become highly routinised and constitute an essential part of the spoken American English. Apparently such a tendency due to the fact that these formulaic

phrases help the speakers produce fluent and native-like language (cf. Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992; Wray 2002; Schmitt & Carter 2004, 2010).

The results of the analysis of the distributional differences and formulaic features of EFFs, such as lack of *that*-complementiser and high frequency, as well as the prevalence of the analysed EFFs in spoken discourse may be summarised as follows. First, EFFs are predominantly followed by *zero*-complementiser, even if they occur not that frequently in the corpus which points to their formulaicity (cf. *I presume* occurs in the spoken part of COCA only 2 times per one million words (199 instances overall). Secondly, the fact that the four selected EFFs are used much more frequently in spoken discourse than in other types of discourse additionally indicates the advantage of their use in conversations, providing the speakers with useful pre-constructed formulaic phrases which promote their fluency. *I guess* appears in the corpus data with more than half of all instances in the spoken part of COCA (59.5 per cent), whereas the presence of the other three EFFs in the spoken part ranges from approximately 52 per cent to 40 per cent (*I assume* and *I presume*), apart from *I suppose*, occurring only in 25.2 per cent of all instances of other sections of COCA. Overall, it may be concluded that EFFs tend to be differently distributed in the corpus and are used in various ways by the speakers, and therefore seem to ‘behave’ also quite differently in discourse, depending on the given situation in conversation.

² The frequencies of each EFF, which occurs in the other four sections of COCA (apart from *SPOKEN*), i.e., *FICTION*, *MAGAZINE*, *NEWSPAPER*, *ACADEMIC*, have also been calculated to provide the results mentioned in this Subsection (by searching for strings [*EFF that*] and [*EFF that 's*], subtracting them from the overall frequency of the given CTP-phrase, i.e. with and without *that*-complementiser, in the given section; and then adding these together). The results of these calculations are as follows:

I guess with and without *that*-complementiser occurs: in *FICTION* 11,235 times, in *MAGAZINE* 2,083 times, in *NEWSPAPER* 2,757 times, and in *ACADEMIC* 482 times; without *that*-complementiser: 9,877 times, 1,828 times, 2,459 times and 419 times, respectively (cf. 21,434 instances in *SPOKEN*). Total frequency in all sections: 36,017 (cf. 38,769 instances with *that*-complementiser). Note that the frequencies in the other four sections have not been filtered out manually, e.g. cases of *I guess* + *that* acting as object have not been excluded (i.e. by entering [*EFF that*] and sorting out that cases by looking at each excerpt in detail); because it would require too much manual work and analysing of hundreds of corpus text excerpts. However, *I guess/suppose/assume* + *so* have been excluded.

I suppose with and without *that*-complementiser occurs: in *FICTION* 5,736 times, in *MAGAZINE* 788 times, in *NEWSPAPER* 553 times, and in *ACADEMIC* 368 times; without *that*-complementiser: 5,015, 703, 502 and 323 times, respectively (cf. 2,208 instances in *SPOKEN*). Total frequency in all sections: 8,751 (cf. 9,827 instances with *that*-complementiser).

I assume with and without *that*-complementiser occurs: in *FICTION* 679 times, in *MAGAZINE* 161 times, in *NEWSPAPER* 128 times, and in *ACADEMIC* 107 times; without *that*-complementiser: 596, 121, 99 and 53 times, respectively (cf. 952 instances in *SPOKEN*). Total frequency in all sections: 1,821 (cf. 2,280 instances with *that*-complementiser).

I presume with and without *that*-complementiser occurs: in *FICTION* 238 times, in *MAGAZINE* 34 times, in *NEWSPAPER* 35 times, and in *ACADEMIC* 34 times; and without *that*-complementiser: 229, 31, 29 and 42 times, respectively (cf. 194 instances in *SPOKEN*). Total frequency in all sections: 483 (cf. 588 instances with *that*-complementiser). Source: <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>, 20 February 2015.

The ability of EFFs “to float” within the utterance (Thompson & Mulac 1991: 326), which indicates another aspect of their formulaic nature (cf. “*formulaic use*” of Diessel & Tomasello 2001: 106), will be described in the following Subsections, where the possible positions, scope and points of insertion of EFFs will be scrutinised.

6.2. Positions and scope of EFFs

In this Subsection the variety of positions of clausal and phrasal EFFs, viz. initial, medial and final, which have been identified in the given corpus data of American conversational English, will be presented, briefly discussed and compared with previous studies which examined the positional distribution of EFFs. In addition, the positions of each of the analysed EFFs will be illustrated graphically and compared with each other, thereby differentiating between clausal and phrasal scope.

The analysis of the 200 spoken occurrences of the four EFFs (50 cases of each) with respect to their positions in the corpus has yielded the following results which are presented in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Overall distribution of the main positions of EFFs in the corpus data, elicited from COCA.

<i>Position of EFFs</i>	<i>Number of instances of EFFs in the given position</i>	<i>Number of instances of EFFs in the given position, in per cent</i>
initial	109	54.5 %
medial	55	27.5 %
final	36	18 %

Table 5 above shows that over half of all EFFs appear in their initial position (54.5 per cent), i.e. 109 instances of a total of 200 (both with clausal and phrasal scope). Such an outcome is quite surprising, especially if considering that this study takes “a cautious approach”, suggested by Kaltenböck (2010: 247), whereby all cases of EFFs used with *that*-complementiser have been excluded. It was expected that the result of its adoption will lead to the reduction of the number of the initial EFFs, as it was in the case of *I think* in Kaltenböck’s (2010: 250) research on this EFF in British English conversations, which have been reported to occur much less frequently in its initial than in medial or final position. Similar to Kaltenböck’s (2010: 250) findings, Aijmer’s (2004: 184) study shows that *I think* “was more frequent in mid or end (parenthetical) position than initially” (cf. Aijmer 1997). But, this has not been the case in the current research on the four selected EFFs, but just the opposite: a clear preference for the initial position of EFFs in discourse. Compared to the above

mentioned studies, these results of the current study have been corroborated in other studies, based on conversational data of American English. For example, the tendency of EFFs to be “projective”, i.e. to be positioned before the utterance, has been found by Thompson (2002: 146). Also Kärkkäinen (2003: 56-57) reports the predominance of IU-initial EFFs in her data (61.6 per cent of epistemic phrases i.e. 149 instances of a total of 251). In Kärkkäinen’s (2010: 209) later research on EFFs used in planned and unplanned American English conversations there is again “a prevalence” of clause-initial (and “simultaneously IU-initial”) EFFs in her data, namely 62.5 per cent of all occurrences in unplanned speech (689 of a total of 1103) are clause-/IU-initial EFFs; 73.4 per cent in planned speech, i.e. 108 of a total of 147, and 67.8 per cent, i.e. 167 of a total of 246 in task-related speech. It should be noted that the researcher distinguishes between clause- and phrase-initial occurrences of EFFs, i.e. there are 51.8 per cent and 10.7 per cent in unplanned speech, 54.4 per cent and 19 per cent in planned speech and 58.9 per cent clause- and 8.9 per cent phrase-initial in task-related speech, respectively (cf. Table 9.2 Kärkkäinen 2010: 210-211; Table 9.3, Kärkkäinen 2010: 221-222; Table 9.4, Kärkkäinen 2010: 225-226). In the present study 106 instances of initial EFFs are comprised of 100 clausal and 9 phrasal initially positioned EFFs, i.e. 94 per cent with clausal scope and 8.5 per cent with phrasal scope.

As for the medial EFFs, they occur in 55 cases, i.e. 27.5 per cent of all the instances of EFFs extracted from the corpus. These are followed by the final EFFs (18 per cent), constituting almost one sixth of all occurrences of EFFs in the data (36 instances of a total of 200). Overall, the results with respect to the positional distribution of EFFs in the current thesis (i.e. predominance of initial EFFs, followed by medial and final EFFs) seem to be comparable with the previous research on various EFFs and other types of them. However, the exact enumeration of such studies is difficult because the majority of the studies on EFFs or similar phrases include either those phrases used with *that*-complementiser, or more types and subtypes of them, or analyse both affirmative and negative forms, etc. which, in turn, makes the comparison quite problematic.

Before moving on to the description of the main points of insertion of EFFs identified in the corpus data, the results of the analysis of the scope which EFFs may have over their host construction will be presented. The overall distribution of EFFs with respect to the two possible scope types is illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below, where initial, medial and final positions EFFs (with clausal or phrasal scope) are displayed as coloured pie segments, showing the amount of each position in relation to the whole number of instances in per cent.

Figure 1. Overall distribution of EFFs with clausal scope, in per cent, source: COCA

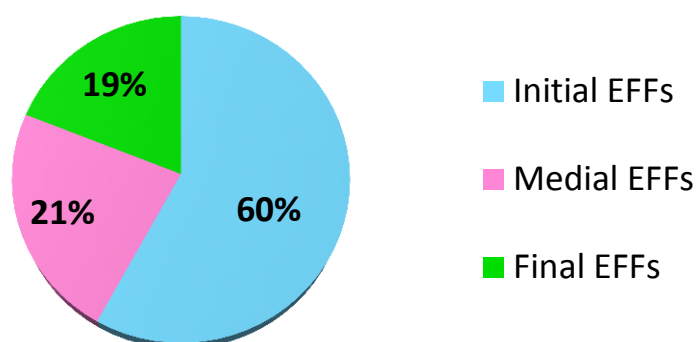
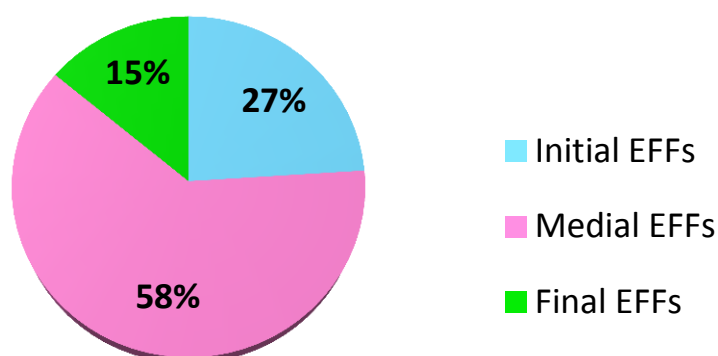


Figure 2. Overall distribution of EFFs with phrasal scope, in per cent, source: COCA

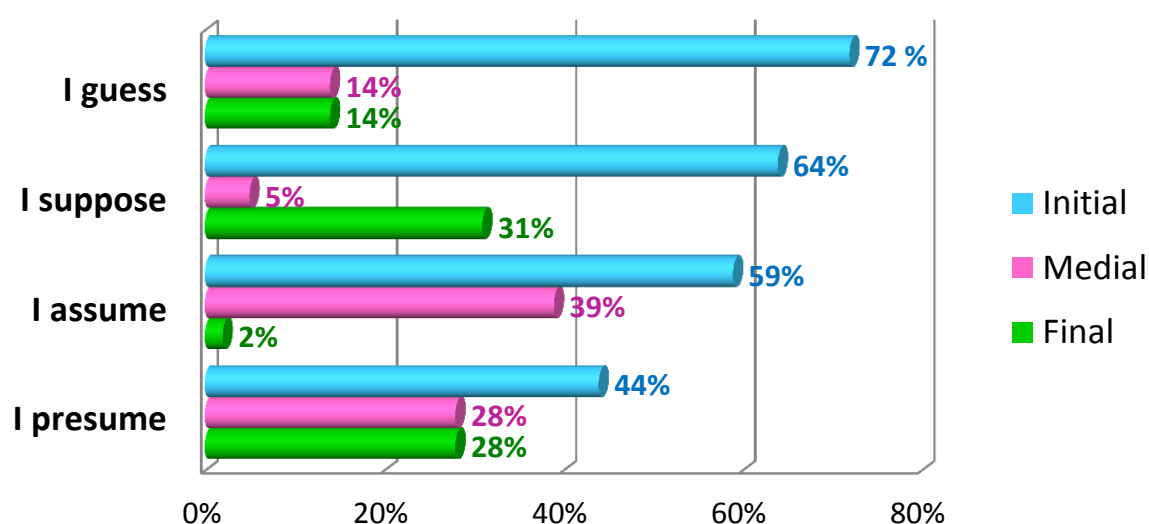


Both diagrams above demonstrate clearly that the positions of clausal and phrasal scope of EFFs differ to a certain extent. According to Figure 1, clausal initial EFFs appear in 60 per cent (100 instances) of all 167 clausal EFFs. This means that, similar to the previous observations, initial EFFs with clausal scope tend to predominate in the corpus data. Also the ratio of medial and final clausal EFFs are comparably similar to the general distribution of the positions presented before, i.e. 21 per cent to 19 per cent (36 and 31 instances, respectively) (cf. 27.5 per cent and 18 per cent, Table 5). These outcomes may easily be explained by the fact that the proportion of phrasal EFFs in my study is less than 20 per cent, constituting approximately one sixth of all selected EFFs (16.5 per cent, 33 instances out of a total of 200). By the way, almost the same number of the instances of one of the most frequent EFFs (*I think*) with phrasal scope has been found in Kaltenböck's (2010: 271-272) corpus data extracted from ICE-GB, more precisely, 19.3 per cent, i.e. 73 instances of the phrasal EFF (*I think*) of a total of 379. The small proportion of phrasal EFFs (i.e. 33 instances) in the present

study notwithstanding, it is important to find out how their positions are distributed in the given corpus data. Figure 2 demonstrates the results of this analysis, according to which phrasal EFFs seem to be mostly positioned at the middle of the clause, namely in 19 instances out of a total of 33 (58 per cent); e.g.: *I mean - they're, they're entitled to, **I suppose**, interpret stuff as they must* (COCA: ABC_GMA-34)). As for the initially-occurring EFFs, they constitute about one fourth of all phrasal EFFs (27 per cent, i.e. 9 instances of a total of 33; e.g.: *And **I suppose** in love?* (COCA: NBC_Dateline-37)). Final EFFs with phrasal scope are not typically used by the speakers in their conversations, occurring only 5 times of a total of 33 in my corpus data (15 per cent): e.g. *And imposed by the IRS, **I presume***” (COCA: NPR_TalkNation-24)).

At this point of the current Subsection it is necessary to make a distinction between the positions of *each* of the analysed EFFs, thereby differentiating between clausal and phrasal scope. To begin with, the positions of each of the four EFFs with clausal scope are visualised in Figure 3, which displays the distribution of each of the three common positions of 167 clausal *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I assume* and *I presume* identified in the corpus data. In order to be able to compare the differences of EFFs in the positional distribution, the frequency of the position of every EFF is presented in separate cylinder-shaped chart bars, which indicate their proportion in per cent.

Figure 3. Overview of the positions of each clausal EFF in per cent, source: COCA



As Figure 3 demonstrates, *I guess*, *I suppose* and *I assume* tend to take the initial position in about one out of three cases of the three possible positions, namely in 30, 27 and 26 instances, respectively, of a total of 100 initial clausal EFFs, i.e. 72 per cent, 64 per cent and 59 per cent; whereas *I presume* occurs in about one out of six cases of the three possible

positions, namely in 17 instances of a total of 39 instances (of this EFF with clausal scope), i.e. 44 per cent. *I assume* with clausal scope is the most vivid example of medial EFFs in my data, because it occurs in about one out of three instances of all extracted EFFs used medially (39 per cent), i.e. 17 instances of a total of 44 instances (of this EFF with clausal scope) (cf. frequencies of *I presume* and *I guess* in medial position: 28 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively). On the contrary, *I suppose* appears in the medial position in only 2 cases of a total of 42 (5 per cent), but shows a clear tendency for the final position, constituting 31 per cent, i.e. 13 instances of a total of 42. It is followed by *I presume*, which takes final position in 11 instances out of a total of 39, i.e. 28 per cent. Apart from *I suppose* (31 per cent) and *I presume* (28 per cent), only *I guess* shows a slight inclination to be positioned clause-finally, appearing in 6 cases out of a total of 42 (14 per cent). *I assume* occurs only once as a final EFF (2 per cent), apparently due to its high frequency in medial and initial positions. Overall, Figure 3 illustrates how differently each of the EFFs with clausal scope is positioned in the given conversational data. From the data in the diagram, it is apparent that there is a tendency of *I guess*, *I suppose* and *I assume* to be positioned initially. Compared to the other three EFFs, *I assume* occurs most frequently as medial EFF in the corpus data. Moreover, contrary to *I assume* which takes final position in only one case, *I suppose* and *I presume* seem to be positioned clause-finally relatively often. In the following description of Figure 4 (below) an attempt will be made to compare these tendencies of clausal EFFs with the phrasal ones.

Figure 4. Overview of the positions of each phrasal EFF in per cent, source: COCA

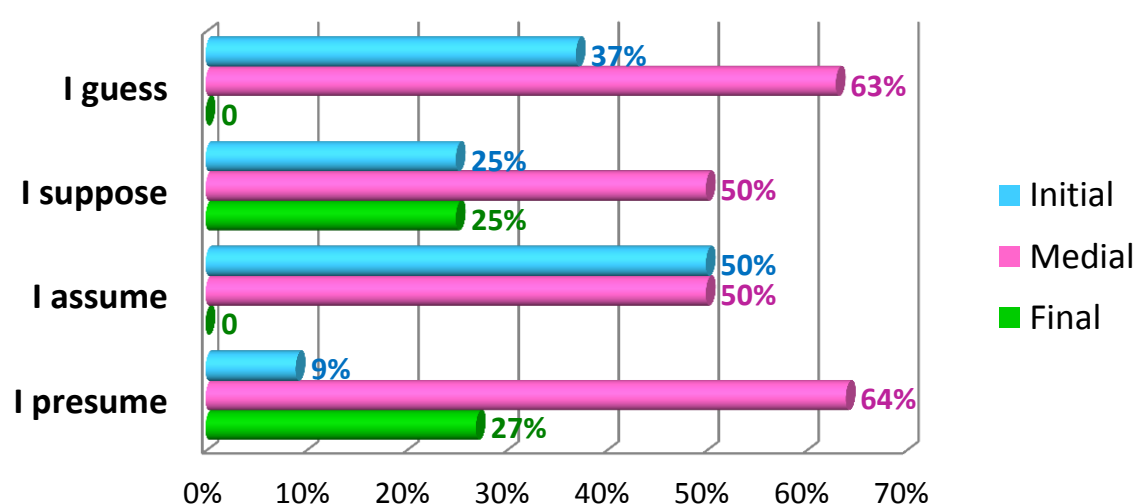


Figure 4 presents the positions of the four EFFs with phrasal scope. Considering that only 33 instances EFFs with phrasal scope (of a total of 200) have been detected in this study, the figures in this diagram will be treated and interpreted with caution.

The analysis of each of the four phrasal EFFs has yielded the following findings. Similar to *I presume* with clausal scope (28 per cent, Figure 3), this EFF with phrasal scope occurs in 27 per cent of all (phrasal) cases in final position. However, it would be premature to define this result as a ‘tendency’, because it occurs as final EFF only in 3 cases of a total of 27. It is thus not surprising that the other EFFs (*I guess* and *I assume*) do not appear in this position at all, apart from 2 instances out of a total of 8 in the case of *I suppose* (25 per cent). As for the initial EFFs with phrasal scope (overall 9 instances), they are distributed as follows: *I guess* and *I assume* occur initially in 3 cases out of 8 and 6 cases, respectively (37 per cent and 50 per cent); followed by *I suppose* taking this position only twice out of a total of 8 (25 per cent), whereas *I presume* appears at the beginning of the phrase/clause fragment only once, i.e. 1 instance of a total of 11 (9 per cent). On the whole, similar to medial and final EFFs with clausal scope, initial and final EFFs with phrasal scope seem to be unevenly distributed as well. Conversely, medial position of EFFs with phrasal scope is distributed uniformly among the four EFFs, ranging from 50 per cent (*I suppose*, *I assume*) to 63/64 per cent (*I guess*/*I presume*), i.e. from 3 instances of a total of 6 instances of medial *I assume* with phrasal scope; 4 instances of a total of 8 of medial *I suppose*; to 5 instances of a total of 8 of medial *I guess* and 7 instances of a total of 11 of medial *I presume*.

To sum up, the detailed analysis of the positions and scope of EFFs identified in the corpus data has resulted in several important conclusions. It has been demonstrated that there is a prevalence of initially-occurring EFFs in the elicited corpus data despite the exclusion of all EFFs followed by *that*-complementiser. It has also been observed that there is a predominance of initial EFFs with clausal scope over medial and final EFFs with clausal scope, and there seems to be a tendency of phrasal EFFs to be positioned medially rather than initially or finally. But what is even more important is the fact that these findings show how positionally mobile EFFs may be, since they occur clause- and phrase medially (27.5 per cent) and finally (18 per cent) in 45.5 per cent of all analysed 200 instances (cf. initially in 54.5 per cent of all cases). This may be considered as a significant indicator of the existence of the essential feature that characterise the formulaic use of EFFs, namely their ability not only to precede, but also follow or be inserted into the associated clause, which have successfully been traced in the given corpus data.

In addition, my findings have shown that there are significant differences in the distribution of positions among each of the scrutinised EFF. This, in turn, makes any categorisation of the given EFFs with respect to their positional preferences problematic. Moreover, the interpretation of the differences in the positional distribution between the four

analysed EFFs becomes even more difficult if one differentiates between their clausal and phrasal scopes.

6.3. Points of insertion of EFFs in the host construction

This Subsection presents the whole range of the possible slots in which EFFs have been inserted by the speakers of American English in the elicited corpus data.

As demonstrated in the preceding Subsection, despite the fact that initial EFFs tend to predominate in my corpus data, they take different positions within their associated clause or clause fragment, partially depending on the type of their host construction (clausal or phrasal). Taking into account this positional mobility of EFFs, it seems that the most appropriate way to examine EFFs is to regard them as ““floated” parentheticals” which act as “independent fragment[s]” (Thompson 2002: 144) with respect to the adjacent clause/phrase. Doing so, EFFs may not only occur in initial, medial or final positions in the associated clause/s, but may also be inserted within its constituents/parts, i.e. in different slots within the associated clause/s. The outcomes of the observation of such EFFs’ behaviour will be demonstrated in the next two Subsections, where the points of insertion of the four selected EFFs identified in the corpus data will be presented in the form of a table, and subsequently briefly discussed. Subsection 6.3.1 illustrates the results of the analysis of the slots in which clausal EFFs occur in the corpus data, whereas Subsection 6.3.2 is focused on those ones in which phrasal EFFs are used to be inserted by the speakers. The main purpose of the presentation of the variety of these slots is to demonstrate how independent and positionally mobile EFFs are and how these features which characterise their formulaic use are reflected in their use in discourse.

6.3.1. Points of insertion of EFFs with clausal scope

This Subsection is devoted to the presentation of the points of insertion of clausal EFFs which have been identified in the elicited corpus data. To visualise a wide diversity of the points of insertions of 167 clausal EFFs as clearly as possible and to save the limited space of the thesis, the results of their analysis are illustrated in Table 6 below, where some examples of the slots in which EFFs have been inserted are also provided. A succinct explanation of these follows after the table. (Points of insertion of EFFs are marked “#”).

Table 6: Points of insertion of 167 EFFs with clausal scope found in the corpus data, elicited from COCA.

<i>Points of insertion of initial, medial and final EFFs</i>	<i>Number of the EFFs in the given slot with corresponding example/s</i>
Initial	Overall: 100 instances
Initial (without any preceding element)	52 instances <i>I guess I did something wrong</i> (COCA: ABC_PrimeTime-4)
Initial (with preceding element, e.g. <i>and, well, so, other EFFs, etc.</i>) (at the beginning of the turn/without any preceding clause/turn - cf. Subsection 5.1.3.)	30 instances <i>And I suppose, you know, when I travel, I want to be moved and I want to be transported, and I want to be sent back a different person</i> (COCA: NPR_TalkNat-85)
Adjunct (adverb, PP, finite/non-finite clause) # Subject	7 instances ► adjunct in the form of an adverb: <i>And then I presume she got the house</i> (COCA: NBC_Dateline-11) ► adjunct in the form of a prepositional phrase: <i>So for the election, I suppose it's best for the president if they take their hard right turn, sort of war on unions, war on women, all these cultural issues</i> (COCA: CBS_FaceNat-7)
Preceded by incomplete structure (incomplete abandoned sentence) and a pause	5 instances <i>Well, the difficulty with the cell-phone records -- I assume that's what you meant by pings -- that particular area, we actually had an expert go out and map the area for cell-phone usage</i> (COCA: CNN_Velez-78)
Clause (end of the turn) # clause (introduced by neither coordinating nor subordinate conjunction)	3 instances <i>We have that footage, I assume we do</i> (COCA: Fox_Five-72)
Preceded by vocatives	3 instances <i>But, Mr. Foukara, I assume you have to expect -- all of your team, wherever they are, have to expect that governments will do all they can to try to curtail -- curtail your coverage, right?</i> (COCA: PBS_NewHour-37)
Medial Position	Overall: 36 instances
Subject # verb phrase (verb phrase presented by e.g. auxiliary verb + main verb, main verb or copula)	7 instances ► subject # auxiliary verb (+ main verb) (4 instances): <i>You, I assume, are not doing all of this as an intellectual exercise</i> (COCA: NBC_MeetPress-51) ► subject # main verb (2 instances): <i>And the chain, I assume, has a big lock on it?</i> (COCA: Dateline-55) ► subject (finite clause) # copula (1 instance): <i>It's just - it's - I mean, everything we do as individuals, I suppose, is a kind of group effort, in a way</i> (COCA: NPR-Science-75)
Auxiliary verb # main verb	5 instances <i>And she's, I assume, going to need help</i> (COCA: Fox_Susteren-32)

Points of insertion of initial, medial and final EFFs	Number of the EFFs in the given slot with corresponding example/s
Main verb # non-clausal complementation (subject/object complement, etc.)	4 instances ▶ non-clausal complementation in the form of subject complement: <i>This is -- she's, I guess, the waitress, or...</i> (COCA: NBC_Today-36) ▶ non-clausal complementation in the form of object complement (of the verb): <i>We would lose, I assume, our AAA credit rating</i> (COCA: ABC_ThisWeek-50)
Main verb/copula (linking verb) # predicative complement (adjective/ adjective phrase or non-finite clausal complementation of an adjective phrase)	2 instances ▶ copula # adjective phrase <i>They're not, I assume, monolithic</i> (COCA: PBS_Newshour-9) ▶ copula # non-finite clausal complementation of an adjective phrase <i>... you were, I assume, unable to talk about the things that you might have liked to talk with her about at the end of her life</i> (COCA: NPR_FreshAir-84)
Subordination:	10 instances
Relative pronoun # relative clause	6 instances <i>The rest are owned by you, Mr. Slocum, who I assume has a retirement plan, a 401(k), an IRA</i> (COCA: PBC:NewHour-54)
Subordinator # adverbial/noun clause	2 instances <i>The Tea Party rose up spontaneously, as I assume these folks have, but they were mature</i> (COCA: SBC_ThisWeek-68)
matrix clause # (subordinator <i>that</i> is omitted) subordinate clause	1 instance <i>So why your (sic.) saying I assume he's the husband -- he's the suspect?</i> (COCA: CNN_Grace-77)
Noun # relative pronoun	1 instance <i>There will be occasions, I presume, where he would disagree with the president-elect, President Obama; he will say so respectfully</i> (COCA: NBC:MeetPress-39)
Coordination: coordinating conjunction # coordinate clause (preceded by another clause/turn cf. Subsection 5.1.3.)	8 instances <i>I basically agree with that, but I guess the question will be, does all of this dialogue around the social issues close off a certain segment?</i> (COCA: ABC_ThisWeek-29)
Final	Overall: 31 instances
Final	24 instances <i>He spoke good English, I presume</i> (COCA: NPR_TalkNation-32)
Coordination: Coordinate clause # coordinating conjunction	3 instances <i>This is Laffer's point, I suppose, but again, this is all speculative</i> (COCA: Fox_Baier-74)
Subordination: Verb phrase # adjunct (clausal) (viz. main clause # subordinator +subordinate clause)	2 instances <i>He violated his principles, I guess, because he's for bailouts, and, and denied a bailout for, for Detroit</i> (COCA: NBC:MeetPress-39)

<i>Points of insertion of initial, medial and final EFFs</i>	<i>Number of the EFFs in the given slot with corresponding example/s</i>
After an interrogative clause	1 instance <i>Can get it anywhere, I presume?</i> (COCA: CBS_SatEarly-28)
After vocatives	1 instance LIVINGSTONE: <i>Ann Coulter, I presume.</i> (COCA: Fox_HC-49)

Table 6 above shows clearly that there exist a lot of possibilities of insertion of EFFs in different slots within the associated clause (or clause fragment) for the speakers of American English. A brief overview of these various points of insertion of initial, medial and final EFFs will be provided in the next paragraphs.

Initial EFFs with clausal scope are the most frequently used ones in the corpus data (60 per cent, i.e. 100 instances of a total of 167 instances of EFFs with clausal scope). They have been used without any preceding element, in more than half of all initial EFFs with clausal scope, namely in 52 per cent of all initial EFFs with clausal scope which have been extracted for the analysis in this thesis (i.e. 52 instances of a total of 100). When preceded by such elements as *and*, *well*, etc. or *other EFFs* (cf. Chafe 1988, cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 55) and positioned at the beginning of the turn (without any preceding turn/clause before these elements/EFFs), initial EFFs have been found in 30 per cent of all initial (clausal) cases (i.e. 30 instances of a total of 100). Less frequent in the corpus data are the cases of initial EFFs, inserted between adjunct and subject (7 instances), used after an incomplete structure and a pause (5 instances), after a completed clause/turn (without any coordinating or subordinate conjunction before another turn/EFFs) (3 instances), or vocatives (3 instances).

Although, compared to initial EFFs, medial EFFs with clausal scope occur less frequently in the corpus data (21.5 per cent, i.e. 36 instances of a total of 167) they are inserted in a great number of various slots (cf. Table 6). Being positioned medially, EFFs have been inserted in my corpus data between subject and verb phrase (7 instances), auxiliary verb and main verb (5 instances), main verb and non-clausal complementation (subject or object complement) (4 instances), as well as between a copula (linking verb) and predicative complement, namely adjective phrase; and non-finite clausal complementation of an adjective phrase (each used only once). Apart from these slots, medial EFFs have also been found in subordinate (10 instances) or coordinate (8 instances) constructions, where they have been used most frequently between the coordinate conjunction and coordinate clause (8 instances), or between a relative pronoun and a relative clause (6 instances) (cf. ‘Coordination’ and ‘Subordination’ in Table 6).

As for final EFFs, they have been found in 31 instances of a total of 167 instances of

all EFFs with clausal scope (18 per cent). In the majority of the cases EFFs appear finally, i.e. at the end of the clause (24 instances). Final EFFs have also been inserted after an interrogative clause and after vocatives (1 instance/each). The rest of the slots of the final EFFs is manifested in those cases of coordinate or subordinate clauses where EFFs have been used before the coordinate conjunction or subordinator (3 and 2 instances, respectively) rather than immediately after them (which have been interpreted as medial EFFs, cf. Subsection 5.3.1; cf. Kaltenböck 2010: 271, Table 10.A1., C; esp. *Notes* (c)).

The results of the analysis of the points of insertion of EFFs are similar to those yielded by Kaltenböck (2010). For example, ‘initial’ EFFs constitute 90 per cent of all clausal EFFs (in ‘prenuclear position’) in Kaltenböck’s (2010: 271, Table 10.A1., A) study (45 instances of a total of 50 clausal *I think*), and in this thesis I have found about 84.5 per cent of such cases (by including all cases of initial EFFs with and without any preceding element (82 instances of a total of 100). Another similar outcome concerns the most frequently used slot of medial EFFs with clausal scope, namely between subject and verb phrase, manifested in 28.4 per cent of all cases of medial clausal EFFs (44 instances of a total of 155) in Kaltenböck’s research (2010: 271, Table 10.A1., B), which has been found in 19.4 per cent of all instances of all medial EFFs with clausal scope in my study (i.e. 7 instances of a total of 36). It should be noted that according to my results, medial EFFs with clausal scope have been inserted most frequently between the coordinating conjunction and coordinate clause, constituting 22.2 per cent of all medial EFFs with clausal scope (i.e. 8 instances of a total of 36). (It should be noted that there is no exact explanation of the ‘middle position’ of *I think* titled as ‘*Other*’ in Kaltenböck’s presentation of its syntactic positions (Kaltenböck 2010: 271, Table 10.A1., B(viii))). Also the point of insertion ‘*final*’ of final EFFs seems to be similarly distributed in both studies, namely, in 73 per cent (i.e. 74 instances of a total of 101 final *I think* with clausal scope) in Kaltenböck’s study (2010: 271, Table 10.A1., C) and in 77.4 per cent in this study (i.e. 24 instances of a total of 31 occurrences of final clausal EFFs).

Despite these similar results, there are some minor differences in the proportion of the slots of initial, medial and final EFFs with respect to their overall frequency in the given position as well. First of all, one of the frequent slots, viz. *relative element # relative clause*, has been occupied in 27 per cent of all medial EFF *I think* with clausal scope, i.e. 42 instances of a total of 155 (Kaltenböck 2010: 271), while in the current study only 16.7 per cent of all medial clausal EFFs (i.e. 6 instances of a total of 36) have been found in this point of insertion. Secondly, some slots in my study are more frequent than in Kaltenböck’s (2010) study. For instance, EFFs inserted between auxiliary and main verb appear in my study in 5

instances of a total of 36 (13.9 per cent), whereas according to the researcher's findings, EFF (*I think*) is inserted in 7 instances of a total of 155 of medial EFFs with clausal scope, i.e. only 4.5 per cent (Kaltenböck 2010: 271). Thirdly, there are also some points of insertion of EFFs which have not been used by the speakers in the given corpus data, but which are indicated in Kaltenböck's study, and vice versa. To take one example, the point of insertion *main verb # finite clausal complementation* has not been identified in this study but has been used in 11 instances out of a total of 155 in Kaltenböck's research (Kaltenböck 2010: 271, cf. Table 10.A1., B(iv)). Conversely, in the researcher's analysis there is no indication of the use of either initial EFFs with clausal scope preceded by vocatives, but which have been found in the current study (see Table 6; cf. one case of final EFF used after a vocative (clause-finally)).

Overall, the results of the analysis of the points of insertion of clausal EFFs show how diverse the slots in which EFFs may be inserted really are. Despite minor differences in the proportions of the EFFs found in certain slots, they also corroborate the previous research findings (Kaltenböck 2010) (Note that these results may differ due to written/spoken differences). Moreover, some new slots have been identified in my research study, which, in turn, demonstrates that there is an almost unlimited number of the various slots in which EFFs may be successfully inserted by the speakers of American English. In the next Subsection I will also present similarities and differences between this study and the research on *I think* conducted by Kaltenböck (2010). (It should be noted that the comparison of the results of the points of insertion of this thesis is confined to Kaltenböck's study, because no other research into EFFs has been found yet which would examine them to that extent).

6.3.2. Points of insertion of EFFs with phrasal scope

This Subsection illustrates a wide variety of the points of insertions of phrasal EFFs and, similar to the previous discussion in the preceding Subsection, compares these findings with previous research studies, viz. Kaltenböck (2010). The results of the analysis of the slots in which phrasal EFFs have been inserted in the elicited corpus data are displayed in Table 7:

Table 7: Points of insertion of 33 EFFs with phrasal scope found in the corpus data, elicited from COCA.

<i>Points of insertion of initial, medial and final EFFs</i>	<i>Number of the EFFs in the given slot with corresponding example/s</i>
Initial	Overall: 9 instances
Initial (i.e. before elliptical sentence/non-clausal host)	► before elliptical/interrupted host: <i>And hunt, so I guess get a firearm license</i> (COCA_PBS_NewsHour-25)

<i>Points of insertion of initial, medial and final EFFs</i>	<i>Number of the EFFs in the given slot with corresponding example/s</i>
	<i>I presume</i> we all -- presume eventually they will be at least made whole (COCA: CNN_JohnKing-12) ► before a non-clausal host: Well, <i>I assume</i>, hopefully, nuclear power (COCA: Fox_Five-7)
Medial	Overall: 19 instances
Within a verb phrase:	7 instances
Between the adjuncts to the verb phrase, adjunct # adjunct (cf. Kaltenböck (2010: 271) "postnuclear position")	3 instances ► adjunct (PP) # adjunct (non-finite clause): <i>So these are in the days after she says somebody swipes her 2-year-old girl, and she never cried, never revealed to you the girl was missing, and in fact, sat there for a couple of hours, I presume, getting " the beautiful life" tattooed on her shoulder?</i> (COCA: CNN_Grace-5) ► adjunct (adverb) # adjunct (adverb): <i>Well, they were saying that, technically, I guess legally he could file some kind of a lawsuit because...</i>(COCA: NBC_Today-35)
After a verb phrase and before other constituents: cf. Kaltenböck (2010: 271) "postnuclear position"	3 instances ► verb phrase # adjunct (non-clausal, PP): <i>I just want to let you know, we're being told the sentence is to be read by the jury or by the judge, I presume, at 4:00 Eastern</i> (COCA: CNN_Politics-73)
Between predicative complements	1 instance ► adjective phrase complement # PP complement: <i>To get a search warrant of an office at the CIA, where the FBI agents come in armed, I presume with security clearances, to come into a building that is probably one of the most fortified in the United States, has to have been an extraordinary series of approvals within the Department of Justice</i> (COCA: MSNBC_Matt-48)
Within a noun phrase:	4 instances
Noun phrase head # post-head dependent (e.g. prepositional phrase, non-finite clauses; or right-dislocated element)	► noun phrase head # prepositional phrase: <i>This has become something, I guess, of a must-win for Mitt Romney</i> (COCA: ABC_This Week-2) ► noun phrase head # non-finite clause (infinitive): <i>This is going to be a worldwide effort I assume to help these people hundreds of thousands in shelters, the missing and the 10,000 we anticipate dead, maybe more</i> (COCA: Fox_Hannity-42) ► clause (noun phrase head) # right-dislocated element <i>But you could get that feeling, people were getting a bit tired of it, I suppose, the situation</i> (COCA: NPR_TalkNation-44)
Coordination:	4 instances
Between different coordinates	1 instance ► noun phrase (+and) # noun phrase: <i>I don't deny that we have a huge economic problem in this country, but one of the things that always bothers me, and I</i>

<i>Points of insertion of initial, medial and final EFFs</i>	<i>Number of the EFFs in the given slot with corresponding example/s</i>
	assume other taxpayers, is the issue of waste (COCA: Fox_Susteren: 47) 1 instance ► noun phrase (nominal) # coordinating conjunction <i>or</i> (+noun phrase) (cf. Subsection 5.3.2. exceptions from final EFFs): <i>Something that Child Services, I guess, or your family's attorney didn't even know about at the time when these children were given permission to go into that home</i> (COCA: CNN_Velez-56) 2 instances ► clause (+coordinating conjunction <i>and</i>) # elliptical clause: <i>So, they are both on their way here, and I presume will be talking to us very shortly</i> (COCA:CNN_LiveFrom-66)
Within a prepositional phrase:	2 instances
Preposition # its noun phrase complement	<i>I want to come back and talk to you about I suppose one of the big concerns right now</i> (COCA: CNN_Morgan-8)
Special cases:	2 instances
Within infinitival phrase: to-particle # verb in infinitive form	<i>And they just want to be able to, I guess, memorialize her and see the tributes that are going to be done</i> (COCA: CNN_Showbiz-50)
Final	Overall: 5 instances
	► after elliptical/interrupted non-clausal host: <i>One of the most repressive regimes in the world, I suppose</i> (COCA: CBS_FaceNA-40) <i>Couldn't change clothes or bathe, I presume</i> (COCA: ABC_20/20-38)

As Table 7 shows, though phrasal EFFs are not numerous in my study, they may be effectively inserted into a great number of different slots within their adjacent clause/phrase. It is not surprising that the widest range of the points of insertion has been found in the cases of the most frequently occurring phrasal EFFs, namely those occurring medially (57.6 per cent; 19 instances of a total of 33). They include phrasal EFFs within a verb phrase (7 instances), e.g. between the adjuncts to the verb, after a verb phrase and before other constituents; within a noun phrase (4 instances), i.e. between the head of a noun phrase and post-head dependent); within a prepositional phrase (2 instances), i.e. between preposition and its noun phrase complement; as well as in coordinate clauses (4 instances) and in a few ‘special cases’ (2 instances of EFFs inserted within infinitival phrase). These points of insertion of medial EFFs with phrasal scope correlate partially with those found by Kaltenböck (2010: 272, cf. Table 10.A.2), more precisely, with the above mentioned slots of EFFs inserted within a noun phrase (10 instances) or within a prepositional phrase (4 instances). But it should be pointed out that EFFs inserted within a noun phrase have only

been found between a noun phrase head and its post-head dependent, but not its pre-head-dependent (cf. Kaltenböck 2010: 272, Table 10.A.2, (b), (c)). The other points of insertion of medial EFFs with phrasal scope (apart from coordination and the cases of EFFs ‘*within a verb phrase*’) have been found exclusively in my study. These are represented by such special cases of the use of phrasal EFFs within a non-finite clause (infinitival clause), namely after particle *to* and the verb in infinitive form (see example in *Special cases*, Table 7). This slot seems to be quite an interesting case of the use of EFFs. Note that the point of insertion ‘*Other*’ (*elliptical HC, phrase internal*) (Kaltenböck 2010: 272, Table 10.A.2, (e)) is not defined exactly and it is not clear how EFFs are positioned in this slot (finally or medially). Hence, it is impossible to say if the two instances of EFF *I think* in this slot, especially *phrase internal*, include the cases of the use of this EFF between particle *to* and the verb in infinitive form in Kaltenböck’s data. Nevertheless, it may be argued that these cases of the use of medial EFFs in my study are quite new and have not been detected so far.

The aforementioned slot of phrasal EFFs, i.e. *within a verb phrase* (between the adjuncts to the verb or after a verb phrase and before other constituents) tends to be frequently taken by medial EFFs. However, it should be taken into consideration that in Kaltenböck’s (2010: 271) study EFFs (i.e. *I think*) with clausal or phrasal scope inserted between two adjuncts or a verb phrase and adjunct (non-/clausal) have been classified as *post-nuclear*, i.e. final (cf. Table 10.A.1, Ci, Cii, Ciii, *ibid.*). This means that in the current study an attempt has been made to interpret the points of insertion under question in a different way. I claim that in the examples, where the EFFs have been inserted between the two adjuncts (e.g. adverbs), phrasal EFFs are positioned medially rather than finally, since they seem to emphasise the following adjunct (e.g. the second adverb in “*technically, I guess legally*”, see example in Table 7), thereby trying to paraphrase what they have already said or presenting an afterthought. (Despite this ‘semantic’ interpretation, one may also argue that the given EFF stands between two adverbs and thus related to both of them; however, the exact analysis of this use of EFFs needs more elaboration and perhaps other types of investigation, e.g. phonological analysis, etc.). Moreover, in the cases of the use of EFFs after a verb phrase and before other constituents, such as non-clausal adjunct (e.g. prepositional phrase, see example in Table 7), EFFs are in mid-position, namely before an element which they highlight from the rest of the utterance, e.g. ...***I presume***, at 4:00 Eastern (cf. 13 instances of *I think* in this slot, interpreted as ‘*Postnuclear*’, in Kaltenböck 2010: 271, Table 10.A.1, Ci). Perhaps it is necessary to regard prosodic patterns of EFFs in order to support my apparently subjective observations of these points of insertion of medial EFFs in the corpus data. An important

point to remember is that it is difficult to draw a borderline between clausal and phrasal scope, because in some cases “the scope is often not clear” (Kaltenböck 2010: 156) at all. This makes the interpretation and discussion of the phrasal instances of the selected EFFs and the slots in which they have been inserted not uncontroversial.

As for the initial and final EFFs with phrasal scope found in the given corpus data, they are mainly linked to elliptical or incomplete hosts as shown in the examples in Table 7. They are inserted either before or after elliptical sentence or an interrupted clause, appearing in 9 initial and 5 final instances (of a total of 33). These slots have also been identified by Kaltenböck (2010: 272, Table 10.A.2, (a), (d)), but in a different proportion, i.e. final phrasal EFFs predominate the medial ones (cf. 10 instances of initial and 19 instances of final EFF *I think* with phrasal scope (of a total of 70)).

Similar to the previous analysis of the EFFs with clausal scope, the analysis of the EFFs with phrasal scope has demonstrated manifold possibilities of their insertion within the associated clause/s. Most of these slots have been found by Kaltenböck (2010) in his study on *I think*, but also some other points of insertion of EFFs have been identified during the examination of these phrases in the present study. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the variety of almost endless possibilities of the EFFs (both clausal and phrasal ones) to be inserted at different points within their hosts shows their distinct positional mobility and ‘independent’ behaviour within the utterance which, in turn, reveal their distinct features which characterise their formulaic use.

6.4. Interactional functions of EFFs identified in the corpus data

This Subsection presents the findings of the analysis of the interactional functions of EFFs in the elicited corpus data. The conducted quantitative analysis in the preceding Subsections 6.1-6.3 was focused on the formal characteristics of EFFs (e.g. their positional distribution, scope) which I could statistically evaluate and compare with previous studies. In this Section I will concentrate on the functional features of EFFs, namely on the interactional functions which pre-positioned/turn-initial (Subsection 6.4.1) and post-positioned/turn-final (Subsection 6.4.2) EFFs perform in discourse. The main aim of it is to demonstrate the results of this qualitative part of the given study and show that EFFs are “important interactive tools for speakers” (Stubbe & Holmes 1995: 64). As for the determination of the interactional functions of EFFs, it is based on the discussion in Subsections 3.4-3.6 devoted to the interactional functions proposed by Kärkkäinen (2003), and above all on their schematic presentation in Table 1 (Subsection 3.8).

As already noted at the very beginning of the thesis, no calculations of the exact number of each function fulfilled by EFFs in discourse will be made in this study. The definable and easily measureable formal features of EFFs (e.g. positions) have made it possible to carry out a detailed quantitative analysis of EFFs in this study, whereas the functional characteristics have caused much more difficulties in their identification and counting, allowing no exact statistical computation. The problem of the identification of the functions of EFFs lies in their frequently inextricable connection with each other, so that it is impossible to draw a borderline between two or more functions. This, in turn, may result in some situations when several functions are performed by one and the same EFF. Indeed, as claimed by Müller (2005: 8) EFFs “fulfil more than one function or at least have sub-functions”. Due to this multifunctionality of EFFs, which makes quantitative analysis not feasible, the qualitative analysis of the functions of EFFs has been done in the current thesis with the primary aim of showing the variety of the functions of EFFs in conversations, thereby disregarding the overall distribution of the functions of the analysed EFFs. For this reason, the interactional functions identified in the given corpus data (as well as other communicative functions in Subsection 6.5) will only be exemplified with text excerpts from the corpus data and briefly explained. The illustration of the functions of EFFs will show how overlapping they may be and how some of them may depend on their positions, scope or both. This possible close interaction between the formal characteristics of EFFs, such as position or scope, and their interactional and other communicative functions has already been schematically depicted in Table 1 (Subsection 3.8). Moreover, the exemplification of the functions of EFFs will demonstrate the new pragmatic functions of EFFs in discourse, the emergence of which have been brought about by the change of the meaning of EFFs, i.e. from propositional to “conventionalized pragmatic meaning” (Erman 2001: 1339) (cf. Subsection 2.2.4). Finally, the interactional functions identified in the thesis will throw light on the features which characterise the formulaic use of EFFs in conversations (e.g. positional mobility, change of meaning), and reveal how these are reflected in the functional properties of EFFs in the extracted corpus data.

6.4.1. Interactional functions of pre-positioned/turn-initial EFFs

This Subsection demonstrates the interactional functions of pre-positioned/turn-initial EFFs which they perform in discourse and which have been identified in the given corpus data. These functions have been subdivided into three types by Kärkkäinen (2003: 120-121) (cf. Subsection 3.4), namely starting-point function – marking boundaries (Subsection

6.4.1.1), starting-point function – routinely bringing in speaker perspective (Subsection 6.4.1.2), as well as functions of EFFs used in recipient-oriented design of utterances (Subsection 6.4.1.3). The examples of all three types of the functions of EFFs found in the analysed corpus excerpts will be provided in the following Sub-subsections.

6.4.1.1. Starting-point function – marking boundaries

The present Sub-section is focused on the interactional *starting-point function* of turn-initial EFFs when they mark boundaries, for example, frame an aside, an upcoming answer, an upcoming opinion sequence, and subsidiary information (and uncertainty) (Kärkkäinen 2003: 121-127, cf. Table 1, Appendix 9.1, Table 10A).

In the elicited corpus data I have found only several cases of the EFFs performing the starting-point function to mark boundaries. Before providing the examples of the use of EFFs which perform this function in different conversational environments, it should be noted that although almost half of all analysed EFFs occur clause-initially (54.5 per cent), the cases of EFFs serving as boundary markers seem to be quite rare. This may be explained by the fact that the selected EFFs tend to appear quite often in questions rather than in answers (cf. EFFs framing an upcoming answer), which is apparently due to the nature of the sample analysed, i.e. TV- and radio shows conversations, where interviewers seem to participate in the dialogue/conversation more actively than the interviewees (cf. discourse markers used infrequently by the interviewees compared to their high frequency in the interviewers' contributions, Fuller 2003: 43).

One case of the starting-point function of the highly frequent EFF *I guess*, where it marks a starting-point of an aside, is given below in (12) (the turns are numbered 1-4):

(12) *I guess* marking a starting-point of an aside (COCA: PBS_NewsHour-24)

- 1 MARK-SHIELDS: He didn't come to New Hampshire until Friday after Iowa.
- 2 DAVID-BROOKS: He's not -- he's going to Nevada this weekend, instead of South Carolina.
- 3 JUDY-WOODRUFF: All right, money, a question about money. The Obama campaign announced they have pulled in \$68 million in the fourth quarter last year. Mark, that sounds like a lot of money compared to what -- *I guess*, the Romney people took in \$24 million in the same... (CROSSTALK)
- 4 MARK-SHIELDS: It does sound like a lot of money. It is a lot of money. But it's not 2008. 2008, Barack Obama had an enormous spending advantage over John McCain. Now, what does that mean?...

The excerpt above is taken from the American television news programme *PBS NewsHour* anchored by Judy Woodruff, where she interviews Mark Shields (American political columnist and commentator) and his counterpart David Brooks (political and cultural

commentator, *The New York Times*). While changing the topic about the person they have been talking about (lines 1-2) and introducing a discussion about money, Judy Woodruff pauses for a moment and gives some additional information at the end of her extended turn (line 3). This information is framed by initial *I guess* and is concerned with the amount of money that Romney “took in the same” period of time (the rest of this interrupted utterance has been deduced from the context). Such a short remark made by the interviewer seems to be embedded in some kind of ‘question’ “Mark, that sounds like a lot of money compared to what”, which is then interrupted by a pause. However, after this pause *I guess* introduces an additional comment which is not directly connected with the main subject (they talk about Obama rather than Romney) serving as a stating-point of the aside, and together with which it constitutes an independent subsidiary utterance. It may be argued that using an EFF in this case, Judy Woodruff might have expressed how uncertain she had been about the exact amount of Romney’s money. But, the fact that the sum of money mentioned was defined by her quite precisely (i.e. “\$24 million”) shows that she was really sure about it, and used the EFF to emphasise that the information about how less money Romney had spent for his campaigns compared to those expenses of Obama, is extra provided for the other participants of the discussion and may be further developed or added by some of them (cf. example 57 in Kärkkäinen 2003: 123). This is exactly what one can see in line 4, where Mark Shields takes the turn and comments on the Obama’s “enormous spending advantage over John McCain”. To sum up, the utterance “***I guess***, the Romney people took in \$24 million in the same...” demonstrates the function as a starting-point of an aside of the given EFF, where it serves as a frame which marks the boundaries of the inserted utterance within the interviewer’s extended turn, thereby providing subsidiary and relevant for the unfolding story (discussion) information and showing certainty of the speaker.

EFFs used to frame an upcoming answer were scarce in my corpus data since the EFFs are used by the American speakers in the majority of cases immediately after the raised question rather than later, “returning to formulating an answer to a question that was presented much earlier in the discourse” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 124-125, cf. example 58). These immediate responses of the interviewees tend to be often framed by EFFs in the elicited corpus data. One of such answers is exemplified in (13) below:

(13) ***I suppose*** framing an immediate upcoming answer (COCA: NPR_TalkNat-71)

CONAN: Aside from this short-term relief, do people there believe default is inevitable?
 GRANITSAS: Well, ***I suppose*** they hope that it's not, but one wonders.

I suppose in the corpus excerpt above constitutes a part of a frame of an immediate answer. The preceding discourse marker *well*, is apparently used to “create conversational coherence” (Fuller 2003:43, cf. Schifffrin 1985, 1987), more precisely, to buy time for the upcoming response which also signals the speaker’s uncertainty about it (cf. Jucker 1993: 435-436).

As mentioned before, the cases where EFFs were used to frame an upcoming answer, presenting a response to a question asked earlier in discourse, are not numerous, but have nevertheless been identified in the corpus data. The following extract from COCA provides an example of *I presume* functioning as a frame of a slightly delayed upcoming reply:

(14) ***I presume*** framing an upcoming answer (COCA: NPR_TalkNat-71)

- 1 O'REILLY : "Factor Follow-up" segment tonight , all over the country, police, once it gets out and everybody in the school will know, you know, it will be passed around in the school. Obviously, this is something that gossip would entail. And all the kids are connected to each other and this, that, and the other thing. So there isn't any place to hide. Is it a status symbol? Is it cool?
- 2 MARVIN: I don't know if it's so much cool. I mean, it's definitely - - it seems to be an attempt to get attention. ***I presume*** it's considered cool. They are traded amongst, you know, numerous students once they're released out there. And again, when the student is unconcerned about what they've just done, *I have to presume* it is some kind of a status symbol or an intent to get attention in some form.

The discussion between the American television host and political commentator, Bill O'Reilly and his interviewee, Marvin, in the corpus excerpt above is concerned with the status of a certain ‘follow-up’ trend observed in recent time. In (1) the interviewer puts two questions: “*Is it a status symbol? Is it cool?*” to which Marvin gives the answers, however, delays them considerably and deals with them not in the order they were raised, and. First, in (2) Marvin is trying to cope with the second question, thereby showing his uncertainty about the answer he is giving, which is manifested in the use of other EFFs such as *I don't know*, *I mean*; as well as a pause before “*it seems to be an attempt to get attention*”. But only after these unsure attempts to produce a required answer to the second question, Marvin inserts the actual answer and frames it with an EFF: “***I presume*** *it's considered cool*”. Again, here EFF *I presume* appears at a boundary in discourse framing the upcoming answer. Secondly, Marvin then proceeds with his further explanations about the way how “*they*” are distributed among the students, and, though later, he answers the first question about the status symbol (1) and inserts a modified EFF, viz. *I have to presume*, after an adjunct in the form of a finite clause and confirms that “*it is some kind of a status symbol*”. Even if one defined this position of the modified EFF in the given case as medial, it would nevertheless function as a part of a frame of an upcoming answer, since “its function as a frame is by no means confined to turn-initial

position” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 128). Considering these observations, it may be stated that in example (..) both EFFs build a frame for the following response and mark a starting-point of the speaker’s personal opinion with respect to the questions raised earlier in the conversation (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 126).

The time between such a question and a delayed or even postponed answer to it may vary significantly. The following example elicited from the corpus data is offered as an illustration of the possible length of the delay of the final response which is framed by EFFs:

(15) ***I guess*** framing a (delayed) upcoming answer (COCA: CBS_ThisMorning-15)

- 1 CHARLIE-ROSE-: We now go to Miami, and bring in chief Washington correspondent and host of FACE THE NATION, Bob Schieffer. Bob, good morning.
- 2 BOB-SCHIEFFER-1CB: Hey, good morning.
- 3 CHARLIE-ROSE-: Let me turn to Hillary Clinton before I talk about Florida. Do you think there's any circumstances in which the President of the United States might decide that he'd rather have Hillary Clinton as his running mate rather than Joe Biden?
- 4 BOB-SCHIEFFER: Yeah. That's the -- if he decided that was the only way he could possibly win. I don't think many people thought that Jack Kennedy would put Lyndon Johnson on the ticket. But he came to the conclusion it's this way or no way. And so he did. I don't think that's going to happen. I - I think that's remote. But every -- every presidential candidate is going to do exactly what he thinks he has to do to win. And ***I guess*** if it came down to that, he would do it. But I don't think that's very likely.

The second utterance in turn 3 in example 15 above is a question put by the television talk show host, Charlie Rose, which is addressed to Bob Schieffer. It may seem that by saying “*Yeah*” in turn 4, Bob Schieffer answers the question straight after it was raised by the first speaker (Charlie Rose), however, he retracts immediately, and is not really sure about it. As a result, his further explanations (actually almost the whole extended turn 4) are full of other EFFs in the negative form (e.g. *I don't think*) and numerous pauses, which, in turn, points to his uncertainty and his ‘buying-time’ strategy. After this long monologue, Bob Schieffer finally answers the original question (3) framing it with *and* and ***I guess***, i.e. “*And I guess if it came down to that, he would do it*”. The former one (*and*) is used to mark the connection to the previous utterance (“*But every -- every presidential candidate is going to do exactly what he thinks he has to do to win*”), whereas the latter one (EFF *I guess*) faces forward and serves as a starting-point of the delayed answer. Moreover, the following *if*-clause seems to be used by the speaker to make his answer less direct (compare his response without this clause, *And I guess, he would do it*). It is also interesting that after this final response the speaker again tried to attenuate it and concludes with “*But I don't think that's very likely*”. Overall, in example (15) the EFF has been used as a part of a frame which marks the boundary between

the question and an adequate, though slightly unsure, answer to it, which appears much later in discourse.

An additional and quite unusual example of the use of the EFFs fulfilling a similar function as in the previous two corpus excerpts is provided below, where *I assume* marks an upcoming answer. (Note that the next example would demonstrate EFFs which are used to frame an upcoming opinion sequence, but these are extremely rare (Kärkkäinen 2003: 126) and have not been found in my corpus data, that is why the following example shows one of the analysed EFFs framing an upcoming answer):

(16) *I assume* framing an upcoming answer (and expressing uncertainty) (COCA:

NBC_Dateline-20)

- 1 Mr-MATTHEWMAN: (In court) How many calls were made to the detective trying to reach him?
- 2 Ms-AIZMAN: (In court) My son, my ex-husband, and myself had to call there, too. *I assume* it was about 25 calls, maybe more.

In the preceding example (15) of the use of EFF to frame a delayed upcoming answer it has been mentioned that due to the particular conversational situation the speaker had to buy time to formulate the upcoming answer, because he was unsure and seemed to hesitate before replying. Quite a similar situation may be observed in (16) above, however the purpose of the use of the EFF is slightly different. In the present example the person who examines (Mr. Matthewman) the witness (Ms. Aizman) by putting the question in 1 is in a court hearing, which implies that the answers should be as precise and succinct as possible, and be provided straight after the question addressed. Nevertheless, Ms. Aizman first mentions who had to call and only then presents the required answer to the question (1), namely: “*I assume it was about 25 calls, maybe more*”. By framing it with *I assume*, she marks not only the starting-point of a boundary in discourse, but also shows her doubt about the exact number of the calls by closing this frame with a linguistic element which expresses uncertainty, i.e. *maybe*.

It should be noted that the use of the given EFF is similar to example (12) where another EFF has been used to frame a starting-point of an aside. But contrary to (12), in the present example the EFF does not introduce subsidiary information (cf. EFFs framing subsidiary information (and expressing uncertainty) (Telljy 399–408), in Kärkkäinen 2003: 129), but provides the needed answer to the question. Moreover, due to the content of the answer (number of calls) it may seem that the analysed EFF perform the approximative function (cf. Subsection 6.5.3). However, though it occurs in the contexts with the indications of numbers or dates, the approximative use of *I assume* cannot be attributed to it, since approximative EFFs are supposed to have phrasal scope (Kaltenböck 2010: 250-255).

In conclusion, the exemplified turn-initial EFFs have been used by the speakers to mark certain boundaries in discourse, such as the beginning of an aside or an upcoming answer, which has been delayed, as well as an immediate answer. The type of the information of this introduced frame prefaced by EFFs seems to be relevant for the upcoming or later discussion. As for the scope of EFFs, it tends to be clausal which, in turn, excludes the overlapping with their approximative use. Interestingly, some of the illustrated cases of the starting-point function of EFFs to mark boundaries have demonstrated some kind of uncertainty of the speakers, though it may not be stated that they are indeed markers of speaker uncertainty, since my analysis disregarded such parameters of the used EFFs as reduced or accelerated phonetic realisation or lack of stress, which could change the results of the analysis in this thesis (Kärkkäinen 2003: 128). In the next Sub-subsection I will demonstrate the EFFs which are used to mark the starting-point of the speaker-perspective, and thus provide more examples of the EFFs performing this function.

6.4.1.2. Starting-point function – routinely bringing in speaker perspective

Since the cases of the EFFs performing the first type of the *starting-point function*, have been exemplified in the preceding Sub-subsection, the cases of the second one, ‘*routinely bringing in speaker perspective*’ will be illustrated in the present Sub-subsection. The EFFs which perform this function are used to mark the starting-point of the speaker’s inserted (new or different) perspective thereby reacting or providing a response to the preceding turn (Kärkkäinen 2003: 130-142) and thus, doing “little more than function as a starting-point for a perspective or the opinion” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 131). In such cases EFFs are inserted in different interactional environments, e.g. answers to questions, in second assessments, weak agreements, and conclusory comments, etc. (Kärkkäinen 2003: 142), where they are used to bring in a different slant in an answer/second assessment/a second opinion sequence, to introduce a disaligning second opinion sequence, to preface weak agreement (and subsequent disagreement) or second assessment (cf. Pomerantz 1984: 66), or to deal with unclear import of previous turn (ibid., cf. Table 1; Appendix 9.1, Table 10B). Some of these contextual situations in which the utterances were framed by EFFs have been found during the analysis of their functions in the present study, and which will be exemplified and explained in the next paragraphs.

The first three examples which illustrate the function of EFFs under question are given below, where EFFs are used to bring in a different slant in an answer (17 and 18) or second assessment (19):

(17) **I suppose** introducing a different slant to an answer (COCA: CBS_ThisMorning-15)

- 1 ANDREW-O'CONNELL: Well, that certainly is something that's new and surprising to see that, in effect, you'll -- you'll have somewhat of a chaperone on these car-planes going to foreign countries with the agents. I think the agents, for -- for the most part that have been doing their job for a long time, aren't going to be affected by having somebody looking over their shoulder, if you will.
- 2 REBECCA-JARVIS: Are they offended by it? Are they offended by it?
- 3 ANDREW-O'CONNELL: **I suppose** some who -- well, **I suppose** some would be, the professionals. And you hope that they're all professionals. *I don't know* if offended is the right word, but certainly concern that this is necessary.

The excerpt above presents a short interview with the former Secret Service agent Andrew O'Connell, in which the co-anchor of *CBS This Morning Saturday*, Rebecca Jarvis, puts a question to him (actually repeats it twice, because she almost interrupted the interviewee at end of turn 1): “*Are they offended by it?*”. Trying to answer this question as quickly as possible, O'Connell starts with “**I suppose** some who”, after which he pauses and reformulates his answer by framing it again with EFF *I suppose*, but this time in conjunction with the preceding *well* (“*well, I suppose some would be, the professionals*”), apparently in order to keep the flow of the conversation and point backwards to the question in turn 2. Despite this second attempt, the interviewee does not answer the original question directly (*some would* vs. *they are*), but puts a new slant on it, i.e. instead of concentrating on the possible offence caused to the agents (“*Are they offended by it?*”) he tries to emphasise *who* would/could they be (Note that the beginning of turn 3 may also be seen as an answer, such as “*yes, some would be offended*”, but since the turn has been interrupted after “*who*” I have interpreted the following newly re-framed utterance as a way to introduce a different slant to an answer thereby trying to avoid a direct answer, like “*yes, they are offended*”). Such answer, which in fact has not been raised by the interviewer, introduces O'Connell's new perspective framed by *I suppose* which, in turn, functions as its starting-point (cf. example 61, Kärkkäinen 2003: 130-131). In addition, another EFF in the interviewer's concluding utterance in turn 3, viz. *I don't know*, points to his uncertainty (as well as previously mentioned pauses, retracts). However, it is primarily used to underline that the word ‘*offended*’ in the question (2) is not appropriate in the given context. Because of this improperly formulated question it had taken the interviewee extra effort to answer it. Similar cases of the use of EFF *I think* have also been identified in Kärkkäinen's (2003) study, namely when EFFs signal that the speaker is “not quite clear about the interactional import of the previous turn” (cf. examples 66 and 67, Kärkkäinen 2003: 137-139).

Another quite similar example is given below, where *I presume* was used to bring in a different slant in an answer, thereby correcting and reformulating it:

(18) **I presume** introducing a different slant to an answer and correcting it (COCA:

PBS_Newhour-51)

- 1 JEFFREY-BROWN: You said that the pope never lost consciousness. But are there any mechanisms in place, any rules that would govern should the pope lose consciousness or become incapacitated?
- 2 JOHN-ALLEN: Well, **I presume** you mean by that permanently incapacitated. It's a terrific question, to which unfortunately there is no equally compelling response (...).

The extract above includes two turns of an interview between an American politician, John Allen, and the *PBS Newshour* anchor Jeffrey Brown. The news anchor refers to what the interviewee had already said previously (“*You said that the pope never lost consciousness*”) and then raises a question (1), to which John Allen tries to find an answer and exactly as in the previous example (17) prefaces his first utterance in his answer-turn with a combination of *well* and EFF *I presume*. Again, the interviewee gives no direct answer to the original question but points to its incorrectness and reformulates it by “*Well, I presume you mean by that permanently incapacitated*”. Doing so, he buys the necessary time to think about the upcoming answer and introduces a slightly different perspective to the whole topic, i.e. instead of talking about pope’s unconsciousness and temporary incapacity he highlights the pope’s possible permanent state of incapacity. Moreover, the interviewee’s following utterance demonstrates that the interviewer’s question was inappropriate and difficult, namely “*terrific*”, to which “*there is no equally compelling response*”.

Based on the results of this analysis of the above extracts from the corpus data and previous research, it can be concluded that EFFs may be effectively used by the speakers to bring in a new or different slant in the answer with regard to an original question (as in the case of *I suppose*), concomitantly reformulating or correcting it (as in the case of *I presume*), as well as to introduce the inappropriateness or incorrectness of the question in the preceding turn (as in the case of *I don't know*) and the resulting interactional trouble with which the speaker has to deal or even struggle with in order to provide an adequate answer.

(19) **I guess** introducing a different slant to the previous assessment (COCA:

ABC_ThisWeek-32)

- 1 GEORGE-STEPHANOPOULUS: (Off-camera) And Rick Santorum joins us now. Senator, good morning, and congratulations on those wins Tuesday.
- 2 RICK-SANTORUM-1RE: Thank you very much, George. I'd thank the folks in Colorado, Minnesota and Missouri. That was quite a shot in the arm.
- 3 GEORGE-STEPHANOPOU: (Off-camera) Well, **I guess** it's three steps forward, a couple back. Yesterday, Mitt Romney took the straw poll at the CPAC conservative conference in Washington. He beat out Ron Paul in the main caucuses. You were back in third. Disappointed?

The present example is an extract from the discussion between the host of ABC Sunday morning *This Week*, George Stephanopoulos, and a prominent politician, Rick Santorum, who was at that time a candidate for the 2012 Republican Party presidential nomination and launched his election campaign that has shown first results during his tour in several U.S. States. After being congratulated by the interviewer on the votes he won on Tuesday (1), Santorum thanks him for this and expresses his gratitude to all people for their support. He then concludes with the assessment “*That was quite a shot in the arm*” (2). To change the direction of the discussion and look at the development of the election campaign from a different point of view, Stephanopoulos adds another aspect to it by talking not only about Santorum’s wins, but also possible defeats (3). Introducing this slightly different slant to the previously mentioned victories and support from the voters (2), Stephanopoulos marks his upcoming turn with a combination of *well*, which points backwards, and *I guess*, which points forwards in discourse since the newly introduced topic will continue later in discourse. Doing so, the interviewer also makes a judgement about the situation and presents it somehow figuratively: “*Well, I guess it’s three steps forward, a couple back*”. The introduction of his assessment is projected forward in discourse and implies that the interviewer’s perspective will follow, as it can be traced at the end of the turn 3: “*You were back in third. Disappointed?*” On the whole, example (19) demonstrates that a speaker may successfully incorporate EFFs in conversation in order to mark the starting-point of his/her perspective or personal opinion with respect to the preceding turn, where the other speaker made an assessment of the situation, etc. under consideration. Thus, when orienting to the assessment given in the prior turn, a speaker may also introduce a new (as in (19) above) or slightly different slant to it depending on the needs which she/he had to meet in a particular conversational situation (cf. example 62, Kärkkäinen 2003: 131-132).

EFFs may not only be used to introduce a new or different aspect to the utterance (e.g. answer, assessment, etc.), but also a disalignment or (weak) disagreement of the speaker with what was said in the prior turn (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 135-137). However, EFFs which serve such purposes in the ‘conflicting’ discourse situations have not been found in my corpus data, since it is comprised of the transcripts of American TV/radio shows, the most common genre of which is a talk show or news programme in various formats, e.g. interviews, political discussions, etc. Such types of conversation in my corpus data seem to include neither heated exchanges nor polemical debates between the guests or interviewer and interviewee. In other words, the majority of the elicited corpus extracts consists of discussions where the interlocutors do not disalign or disagree with each other but rather just ask or give answers to

these questions. That is why none of the analysed EFFs has been found to introduce parts of argumentative discourse. (Note that the exact analysis of the nature/intensity of the discussions has not been carried out due to the lack of the necessary measuring ‘tools’ in COCA and, thus, the aforementioned observations about the ‘missing’ disagreements in the extracted corpus data are based only on my personal interpretation, which should be treated with caution). Nevertheless, one instance of one EFF (*I think*) which has not been considered in this study, but which fulfils the function under question is given below in order to illustrate how EFFs may mark the starting-point of the speaker’s disaligning perspective regarding the prior turn.

(20) Other EFFs introducing a disalignment with the previous turn (COCA: Fox_Hannity-53)

- 1 HANNITY: All right. But why don't we go through the strengths and weaknesses, really quick of all the candidates. And just get your take, Newt Gingrich was here last night. He made his announcement. Strengths, weaknesses, how think he could do?
- 2 STEYN: Newt isn't going to be president. I assume he's in this campaign for the kind of reason Alan Keyes used to get into it 10 years ago, that it's a way of boosting his speaking freeze and other gigs. But Newt Gingrich is not going to be president, and I didn't see the rationale for his candidacy.
- 3 HANNITY: Well, ***I think*** he might do better than you think. I'll give my opinion a little bit here. ***I think*** he will perform very well in debates.

Example (20) above presents an exception in the present corpus data, because it is a short extract from *Hannity (Fox News)* presenting an interview with Mark Steyn, a writer and conservative political commentator, and being “hosted by conservative political pundit Sean Hannity”, who not only interviews his guests, but also gives “his own commentary” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannity>, 28 March 2014). This potential for dispute or disalignment can easily be observed in turn 3. Hannity shows that he does not fully agree with Steyn and his opinion in turn 2, i.e. “*Newt isn't going to be president*”, and provides his own view on the success of Newt Gingrich and his campaign by starting his turn (3) by “*Well, I think he might do better than you think*”. The combination of EFF *I think* with *well* and the use of *might* “suggest that the agreement may be less than a hundred per cent” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 136). Moreover, disaligning with Steyn’s expressed point of view in (2), Hannity underlines that this is his own personal opinion (“*I'll give my opinion a little bit here*”) and then again marks his next utterance by *I think*, developing his first utterance further and demonstrating his subsequent different, perhaps disagreeing opinion: “***I think*** he will perform very well in debates” (cf. *I think* prefacing weak agreement (and subsequent disagreement)

Kärkkäinen 2003: 136). Overall, *I think* in (20) is used to introduce a disalignment with the opinion expressed in the preceding turn and emphasise a further (potential) disagreement.

This Sub-subsection has exemplified cases of EFFs used to bring in speaker perspective, viz. to introduce a different slant to an answer/second assessment or the inappropriateness of the question in the preceding turn. The EFFs analysed have been integrated into discourse to mark “the starting-point for the current speaker’s perspective as a response or a reaction to the prior turn” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 142) and with the help of which the speakers could successfully “*routinely personalize*” [their] utterance[s] (Kärkkäinen 2003: 145). In general, the stating-point function to mark boundaries illustrated in the previous Sub-subsection and to routinely bring in the speaker’s perspective presented in the current Sub-subsection may be summarised under the overarching EFFs’ function of marking the personalised upcoming utterance, whereby in the case of the latter one it is a reaction of the speaker to the preceding turn/utterance who has to deal “with some kind of routine interactional trouble” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 146). Marking the starting-point of the utterance, EFFs may not only be used to emphasise the personalised nature of the utterance and provide a response to the previous utterance, but also to adapt it to the conversational situation and to the interlocutor. This use of EFF by speakers to design or redesign the meaning of the utterances to meet the needs of the other speakers will be demonstrated in the next Sub-subsection.

6.4.1.3. EFFs in recipient-oriented design of utterances

This Sub-subsection is devoted to the presentation of the cases of the EFFs which perform the third type of the interactional starting-point function of turn-initial EFFs, namely that of marking the beginning of the utterance designed, redesigned or modified by the speaker in order to meet the needs of a particular interlocutor in the given situation. When occurring in such recipient-oriented design of utterances, EFFs are used to pursue a certain type of response (cf. Subsection 6.7), to display uncertainty and show solidarity towards the recipient; and to respond to inappropriate alignment by displaying heightened commitment (Kärkkäinen 2003: 146-156; cf. Table 1, cf. Appendix 9.1, Table 10C). Several cases in which the EFFs perform the starting-point function in “the *recipient design* of discourse” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 146) will be provided and briefly discussed in the next paragraphs.

Due to the format of the conversations (interviews) in the corpus data in this study, the EFFs analysed tend to be frequently used by the interviewers in order to mark the starting-point of the utterance in which they want to receive a certain kind of response, and at the same

time to make it “less abrupt and direct” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 148), and to avoid evaluations or explicit personal judgment of the interviewee or his/her actions, etc. The following example will illustrate this tendency of EFFs which function as a starting-point in the recipient-oriented design of utterances:

(21) *I assume* pursuing a certain type of response (COCA: NBC_Dateline-85)

- 1 Mr-ZACCAGNI: We just handled it as a missing person, but a highly significant missing person.
- 2 HOLT: (Voiceover) Darrell has now retired from the Bellefonte police force, but back then he was the lead investigator on the case.
- 3 HOLT: *I assume* alarm bells are ringing loudly when the DA goes missing.
- 4 Mr-ZACCAGNI: Yeah. When the DA is missing you get a little concerned. We figured that there's a much better chance that there's foul play involved than the guy who just doesn't come home because he's been out at the bars all night.

The extracted interview above with the investigator of the case of the missing DA (district attorney Ray Gricar), Darrel Zaccagni, is conducted by *NBC Dateline* anchor Lester Holt. The interviewer tries to evaluate the interviewee’s past reaction to that situation and its importance in turn 3, namely after *voiceover* in 2, where he describes shortly Mr. Zaccagni’s present retirement from the police and his leading role at that time in the case. In order to make this assertion concerning the interviewee less direct and to avoid explicit evaluation of the situation in which he had been after the DA’s disappearance, Holt starts this turn (3) by *I assume* putting somehow figuratively “*alarm bells are ringing loudly when the DA goes missing*” after it. Doing so, he seems to express his certainty about the significance of the case for the officer and in general rather than doubts about the role of this highly important case for the police. Moreover, the utterance in turn 3 is inserted by Holt to “ensure a certain type of *alignment*” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 146), i.e. he wants the interviewee to agree with him about the content of the utterance (3), accept it and perhaps comment on it. In other words, he expects a certain kind of response from Mr. Zaccagni. This is exactly what the interviewee does in turn 4, in which he confirms the interviewer’s utterance in the previous turn (3) with “*Yeah*” and immediately repeats it, thereby reformulating it slightly: “*When the DA is missing you get a little concerned*” (and which, in turn, shows that he understood that Holt’s assertion was directed at him and his personal role and reaction in the case). Such a pursuing of a preferred answer framed by the EFF is a vivid example of the use of EFF in the recipient-oriented design of utterances, where they also help the speakers make the utterance less direct (as it concerns the interlocutor or her/his (past) actions, etc.), avoid a potential “high face threat” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 148) to the interlocutor (e.g. interviewee), and receive his/her agreement with it.

Another exemplification of the tendency of the EFFs to mark the stating-point of the utterance aimed at pursuing a certain kind of preferred response from the interlocutor is given below:

(22) ***I presume** pursuing a certain type of response* (COCA: CNN_Reliable-55)

- 1 (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) MIKE WALLACE, CBS: Dan should have said, if they go, I go. If the people on whom he depended are fired, lose their jobs, he was the -- he was the guy on camera. Absolutely he should have resigned. (END VIDEO CLIP)
- 2 KURTZ: Mary Mapes, ***I presume*** you disagree with that
- 3 MAPES I sure do. I think it's also ironic, because you may remember a certain incident with Mike Wallace, it turned into the movie "The Insider".

In example above the host of the weekly *CNN* programme *Reliable Sources* Howard Kurtz makes an attempt to evaluate his interviewee's (Mary Mapes) reaction and opinion about some past event. In the given case this past situation was presented in the video clip they had just watched (1), and after which the interviewer is quite sure that Mary Mapes does not agree with the content of it. However, Kurtz avoids an abrupt assertion or explicit evaluation of Mapes' reaction prefacing it with *I presume* (2): "*Mary Mapes, I presume you disagree with that*". Contrary to example (21), where the interviewer frames the evaluation of the interviewee's past role/actions with *I assume*, and additionally hides the directness of the whole utterance by using metaphorical language (cf. "*alarm bells are ringing loudly*"), in the current extract the interviewer refers to the interviewee directly by name and points to her expected disagreement with what had been mentioned in the video in 1, attenuating it with the EFF *I presume*. The possible reason for such reference to Mapes' disalignment may be explained by the Kurtz' intention to gain acceptance of his assertion and get a particular type of preferred response from her. Apparently Kurtz' intention is much stronger than that of Holt in the previous example (21)). Again, prefacing the utterance aimed at pursuing this answer with *I presume* in turn 2, the interviewer indeed receives the expected response from the interviewee who immediately replies "*I sure do*" (cf. response "*Yeah*" in turn 4, example ..). Doing so, Mapes not only provides the response to the declarative clause (used to express a question) (2), but also agrees with the interviewer's claim about her disagreement with the video clip (See Subsection 6.7 for more examples and explanation of EFFs used in declarative clauses/questions). Overall, in the above example *I presume* has been used by the interviewer to mark the starting-point of the utterance, the main aim of which has been to elicit a preferred response, thereby making it less direct or abrupt, as well as to receive an acceptance of the asserted reaction of the interviewee to the video, namely the "presumed" disagreement about its content.

Apart from the above cases, there are also cases of the use of EFFs, when a speaker is engaged in conversation about some person who is not present, but to whom he/she expresses his/her attitude. The following extract demonstrates such use of *I assume*, which aids the interviewer in pursuing a particular response:

(23) *I assume* pursuing a certain type of response (COCA: CNN_Showbiz-18)

- 1 HARLOW: You've been a big supporter of President Obama. *I assume* you're supporting him again this time around?
- 2 CARTER: Of course, of course.

Before starting with the brief discussion of the extract and EFF's function in it, it should be noted that though the interviewer's (Katherine Julia Harlow) turn (1) ends with a question mark, "*I assume you're supporting him again this time around?*", it constitutes a declarative clause, since it has the same form as a declarative sentence (no inversion of subject and verb). This declarative clause is used to express a question, more precisely "the speaker asks for confirmation rather than for information" (Biber et al 1999: 203). The difference between such sentences with and without question mark lies not in the marking itself, but primarily in a rising intonation with which it is spoken. Presumably, the transcribers of the corpus data wanted to single out such instances where the speakers indicated the declarative questions by a rising intonation which is typical in such situations (cf. the analysed utterance in the previous example, where a question mark might have also be used: "*Mary Mapes, I presume you disagree with that (?)*", cf. Subsection 6.7).

The second utterance in turn 1 in example (23) shows the interviewer's intention to receive a certain type of preferred response from the interviewee (Carter) concerned with his support of Obama. In order to make her utterance even more plausible and ostensibly to gain even more acceptance of the proposed assumption about Carter's attitude towards Obama, Harlow starts her turn (1) with: "*You've been a big supporter of President Obama*", after which she immediately inserts "*I assume you're supporting him again this time around?*". It is evident that in this case the EFF serves as an essential starting-point marker which enables the interviewer to make the utterance under consideration less direct, and concomitantly to pursue a particular response, more precisely the agreement with the interviewer or about her assertion. This alignment with the interviewee is additionally ensured by the aforementioned beginning of the turn 1 provided by the interviewer. Interestingly, similar to the previous examples, in the current extract the interviewee entirely agrees with the interviewer, i.e. about her assertion concerning his future support of Obama and repeats twice (2): "*Of course, of course*". The overall function of the given EFF in the present example may be interpreted as

follows: *I assume* has been used by the speaker (interviewer) to preface a declarative clause aimed at eliciting the preferred response from the other speaker (interviewee), thereby presenting it as reasonable (additionally supported by the preceding statement) and less abrupt (EFF *I assume*), and thus avoiding possible face threat to the that speaker and any evaluation of his/her attitude to the person they spoke about (President Obama).

Two slightly different cases of the EFF performing the starting-point function in the recipient-oriented design of utterances are illustrated and discussed below:

(24) *I suppose* pursuing a certain type of reaction (COCA: NBC_Matthews-81)

- 1 Ms-KAY: We'll know women have made into the cad, right. There are no women cads up there. It's going to be Dominique Strauss-Kahn for me. Just, you know, the allegations of what happened in the hotel room, and then everything we learned subsequently, his incredible sort of fall from the pinnacle of power central to the European crisis, future president of France, blew it all not just on one incident but the allegations of several.
- 2 MATTHEWS: Yeah, it did sort of show how he lived.
- 3 Ms-PARKER: *I suppose* the consequences of his actions had much broader reach.
- 4 Ms-KAY: Right.

In example (24) *I suppose* is used to mark the starting-point of the utterance which is not directly aimed at pursuing some kind of response, but is more focused on the reaction of the interlocutors and their agreement about the assertion concerning some person's actions who is not involved in the discussion. More precisely, while anchoring *The Chris Matthews Show* Christopher Matthews talks about a person who is not present at the show (unidentified "he") and discusses "his" life with his regular guest Kathleen Parker, an American columnist, and with BBC's anchor Katty Kay. After Kay's description of "him" in turn 1, the interviewer confirms it with "Yeah" and points to the type of life he lived (i.e. "sort of show"). At this point the third person who participates in the discussion, Ms. Parker, inserts her turn, starting it with EFF *I suppose*: "*I suppose the consequences of his actions had much broader reach*". It may be argued that the EFF in Parker's utterance might have also functioned as a marker of a new perspective, however, this is not the only purpose which *I suppose* serves in the present example. It seems that one of the main purposes of the EFF is to mark the utterance aimed at gaining the acceptance of the expressed assertion by the other interlocutors. Concomitantly, prefacing it with the EFF, the speaker (probably) wanted to see what reaction it will provoke among the participants of the discussion, thereby making it less direct. Again, similar to the previous extracts, Parker's utterance in (3) is immediately confirmed by Kay's "Surely" in turn (4).

The second case of the use of EFF which function as starting-point markers of the utterance aimed at pursuing a particular type of reaction is provided below:

(25) *I suppose* pursuing a certain type of reaction (COCA: CBS_Early-68)

- 1 ERICA-HILL: Mm-Hm.
- 2 HEATHER-CABOT: Maybe think about having a curfew for your phone. I mean a lot of parents do that with teenagers, turn in the phone at eight o'clock and do that for yourself; have a blackout.
- 3 ERICA-HILL: Even during dinner.
- 4 JIM-AXELROD: And -- and *I suppose* -- yeah, and *I suppose* you shouldn't then turn around and wonder why you're having communication difficulties with the people you actually trying to talk to face-to-face if you're texting them at eleven o'clock at night.
- 5 HEATHER-CABOT: Well, yes, yes, good point.
- 6 ERICA-HILL: All right.

The purpose of the illustration of the second example (25) of EFFs is to demonstrate how the speakers may design such utterances in other conversational situations. Contrary to the previous example, in which the utterance was concerned with some third party not present during the discussion (cf. example .. “*he*”), the current extract from *The Early Show* shows how the anchor Jim Axelrod formulates his utterance by seemingly referring to people in general using “*you*”, but probably to everyone, including the participants of the discussion (4). Axelrod’s utterance itself is well-incorporated into the discussion and presents a new perspective on the topic discussed. However, as already observed in the preceding example, the aim of introducing a new slant to the previous turn (i.e. preceding discussion about the phone) is not the only one in the interviewer’s turn. His utterance is primarily designed to receive an acceptance of this perspective proposed by him, which he indeed successfully gains in turn 5, where the guest of the show, Heather Cabor, not only entirely agrees with Axelrod’s view (“*Well, yes, yes,...*”) but even praises it (“*good point*”). Apparently, the repetitions in Cabor’s confirming turn (5) are made in order to emphasise that Axelrod’s utterance was really “*good*” and to ensure his certainty since he seemed to hesitate before starting the turn, i.e. “*And -- and I suppose -- yeah, and I suppose*”. In addition, if one compares the participation of the anchor (Jim Axelrod) in turn 4 and his co-anchor (Erica Hill) in turns 1, 3, and 6, then it is obvious that the latter one inserts only very short comments (3) or just confirms the previous utterances (1 and 6). This, in turn, emphasises the importance of the utterance prefaced with *I suppose* which is inserted by the anchor in the discussion in order to be accepted by the other interlocutors. More precisely, constructing his utterance (4) Axelrod uses the EFF with the aim of making it less abrupt, thereby ensuring the agreement about the expressed point of view and avoiding direct evaluations either about preceding opinion mentioned in the discussion or about the participants themselves.

To sum up, the last two examples have shown that EFFs may successfully be used by the speakers to preface and make less direct and abrupt the utterances designed to pursue not

only a certain type of response, but also a particular reaction from the participants, above all their approval of the provided assertion in the utterance or the utterance itself. Doing so, the speakers have also the opportunity to avoid a face threat to the interlocutors.

As regards the other purposes which EFFs may serve as starting-point markers in the recipient-oriented design of utterances mentioned by Kärkkäinen (2003: 157), i.e. to “disguise in forgetfulness an answer that would otherwise directly remind the recipient of unpleasant past events, and respond rather forcefully to the improper alignment of the other participants”, these have not been found in my corpus data for two reasons: on the one hand, a considerable part of the turn-initial EFFs appeared to be used in utterances aimed at pursuing a certain type of response or reaction; and on the other hand, apparently due to the nature of the television show conversations the extracts do not contain the conversational situations where interlocutors share some private information or did something together, etc., at least not my corpus data.

The last point in this Sub-subsection is concerned with the multifunctionality of EFFs, namely the possible overlapping of some of the functions of EFFs. It is necessary to make a distinction between the previously discussed cases of the EFFs used for introducing the speaker’s new or different perspective to the preceding turn (cf. Sub-subsection 6.4.1.2) and the present cases of EFFs used in the recipient-oriented design of utterances. Despite some similarities, they differ in that they mark assertions about different aspects of the conversation. More precisely, in the previous cases of EFFs (*“routinely bringing in speaker perspective”*) the speaker expressed his or her assertion, assessment or attitude towards the issue or other person referred to in the prior turn (examples 18, 20), whereas in the current cases the speaker produced the utterances with respect to the interlocutor’s past behaviour, role, or attitude, etc., “which may potentially constitute a high face threat to that participant” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 148), as in examples (21) or (23).

In addition, as pointed out above, turn-initial EFFs tend to be used at the beginning of the utterance which is aimed at pursuing a particular response or reaction from the interlocutors. This also points to their main role in discourse as linguistic devices aimed at “secur[ing] alignment with what follows, and how what follows is to be taken by the recipients” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 69). Moreover, the analysis of the selected EFFs supports the findings of Thompson’s (2002: 152) study, where EFFs occurred most frequently with the associated complement utterances, in which the speakers used them for “expressing stance or negotiating alignment with one another (what we vernacularly call arguing, agreeing, and disagreeing) with respect to some issue”. In the following Subsection I will illustrate quite

different functions of EFFs which they perform not when they are used at the beginning of the turn, but after it, thereby marking “turn completion and turn exchange” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 162) and “pursuing uptake from the recipients” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 170).

6.4.2. Interactional functions of post-positioned/turn-final EFFs

This Subsection demonstrates extracts, in which EFFs occur turn-finally, i.e. positioned after what they have in their scope, thereby signalling completion and pursuing a certain kind of response (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 161-170; see Subsection 3.5, Table 1, cf. Appendix 9.1, Table 11). It should be noted that in this study turn-final EFFs have been treated as those appearing at the end of the clause/clause fragment, rather than “encoded as separate IUs” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 86). Several illustrative examples of turn-final EFFs which have been used by American speakers for various purposes will be provided and briefly explained in the next paragraphs. But before moving on to the illustration of the functions of turn-final EFFs of signalling completion and pursuing a response, it is important to point out that final EFFs constitute almost one sixth of all EFFs analysed in this thesis (36 instances of a total of 200). Turn-final EFFs occur in 15.5 per cent of all extracted cases (26 instances of ‘final’ clausal and 5 phrasal EFFs (cf. Table 6 and Table 7) (overall 31 instances; not included in this range of EFFs are 3 instances of coordination (cf. example (40) Subsection 6.5.2) and 2 instances of subordination). Due to this relatively small number of turn-final EFFs, it would be premature to make any generalisations about their functional tendencies and it would also be difficult to find out what function of turn-final EFFs prevails in my corpus data. (Note that no exact calculations of the number of the instances of the function under question (as well as the other ones discussed previously) have been made in this thesis).

To begin with, one example of the turn-final EFF *I suppose* is provided below, in which this EFF helps the speaker mark the turn completion thereby showing his uncertainty:

(26) ***I suppose*** signalling turn completion (and emphasising uncertainty) (COCA:

NBC_Today-12)

- 1 LAUER: Is there room for both things though? I mean, you have a wonderfully written, beautifully acted show here and it's a great luxury and it's a nice position to be in. But do you understand that there is an audience for all things out there?
- 2 Mr-HAMM: There's a lot of channels on the dial and those channels need to be filled up with things. And listen, it's a different strokes for different folks, ***I suppose***.
- 3 LAUER: Matthew, have you started to think about how this show comes to an end? Is this seventh season going to be the last season?
- 4 Mr-WEINER: This is the fifth season.

In the extract above the host of NBC's *The Today Show*, Matthew Todd Lauer, discusses the return of the *Mad Men* show with its creator and producer Matthew Weiner (turn 4), and one of the actors, John Hamm (turn 2). In turn 1 the interviewer (Lauer) puts two questions to the actor (Mr. Hamm) about the audience and the necessity of the show on the television. Hamm provides immediately one response to the both questions in turn 2, in which he tries to explain that the numerous television channels "*need to be filled up with things*". But Hamm's turn is not finished: he inserts a kind of summarising statement starting it with "*And listen,...*", marking its completion with *I suppose* (2). Doing so, he expresses a certain degree of doubt about the content of his concluding remark about "*different strokes for different folks*". Hamm's uncertainty is highlighted by *I suppose*, which possibly also signals his reluctance to further elaborate on his arguments and explanation. This has probably been understood by the interviewer who immediately asks another speaker (Mr. Weiner) a completely different question, and thus putting no questions to Hamm. Overall, the given extract (26) is an illustrative example of how the speaker has used the EFF to signal turn completion (and possibly reluctance to answer the question in more detail), which, at the same time, points to his uncertainty.

The following example demonstrates perhaps even more vividly how EFFs may indicate such uncertainty of the speaker when they are used at the end of the turn, at the same time signalling its completion, as in (27) below:

(27) *I guess* indicating uncertainty at the end of the turn (COCA: NBC_Today-38)

- 1 KOTB:... get up there, but she was great. And we also had our viewers, *I guess*, -- and this is from Bobbie Thomas, they weighed in with their favorites.
- 2 GIFFORD: I'm sure. And what -- and who won that one?

The above extract shows clearly that the interviewer (Hoda Kotb) was unsure about the viewers they have (i.e. pauses), and thus inserts *I guess* at the end of her assumption (1): "*And we also had our viewers, I guess*". Kotb's uncertainty is manifested in a pause after her turn, after which she inserts an utterance with a completely different content, i.e. the change of the topic/subject "*and this is from Bobbie Thomas, they weighed in with their favourites*". This shift from one subject to the other is marked by the speaker with the pause, whereas the completion of the first utterance ("*And we also had our viewers*") is framed by *I guess*, which also expresses the doubts of the speaker about the information given. On the whole, the main function of *I guess* in (27) is to signal the completion and the exchange of the turn, thereby expressing the uncertainty, being inserted at the boundary between two different topics/subjects of discussion (cf. *I don't know* as a marker of turn exchange, Scheibman 2000:

120). In addition, similar to the previous example (26), *I guess* in (27) has a clausal construction in its scope, facing backwards in discourse and pointing to what has already been said previously in the conversation.

In the following example I will demonstrate how turn-final EFFs may also have a phrasal unit in their scope thereby “marking completion of some sub-unit in the speaker’s turn” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 165) and expressing some degree of uncertainty:

(28) *I suppose* signalling completion of some sub-unit in the speaker’s turn (and showing some degree of uncertainty) (COCA: CBS_FaceNat-40)

- 1 SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, Liz, thank you so much. Liz Palmer in Tripoli this morning. Good morning again. And we are joined in the studio by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense. Madam Secretary, let me start with you. Tens of thousands of people have turned out protesting in Syria which has been under the iron grip of the Assads for so many years now. One of the most repressive regimes in the world, *I suppose*. And when the demonstrators turned out the regime opened fire and killed a number of civilians. Can we expect the United States to enter that conflict in the way we have entered the conflict in Libya?
- 2 CLINTON: No. Each of these situations is unique, Bob.

In example (28) above the noun phrase “*one of the most repressive regimes in the world*” is inserted by the interviewer (Schieffer) as additional new information about the kind of “*the iron grip of the Assads*” and framed by *I suppose*, pointing back to the preceding utterance (1) (cf. Chafe’s (1988) ‘afterthought’ function of intonation units, in Kärkkäinen 2003: 162). However, the main function of the given EFF is “not to bring in new information but to regulate the interaction or information flow” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 162). This ‘management’ of the discussion is achieved by marking the completion of a particular sub-unit by *I suppose*, i.e. a kind of introduction about the situation in Syria. Moreover, working as a final frame of the speaker’s utterance within the extended turn, this EFF functions as a transition to the following question addressed to the interviewee (Madam Secretary): “*Can we expect the United States to enter that conflict in the way we have entered the conflict in Libya?*” The given EFF shows also some degree of uncertainty of the speaker, or at least expresses his own personal view at the Syria’s regime, additionally making his utterance less direct or abrupt. Overall, in example (28) *I suppose* functions as a final frame of the speaker’s utterance and marks the completion of the sub-unit (description of the regime) represented by the noun phrase, thereby expressing some doubts of the speaker about the utterance which he has just made and connecting it to the upcoming answer. (Note that I have interpreted the host clause associated with *I suppose* as a phrasal one, i.e. noun phrase, despite the fact that it may also be regarded as an elliptical variant of the sentence, but since according to Kaltenböck

(2010: 272, Table 10.A.2.) EFFs with phrasal scope may occur with elliptical hosts (i.e. 'Other') I have also treated them as phrasal instances of EFFs)

The sub-units, the completion of which is signalled by EFFs within an extended/long utterance (cf. (28)), may also be shorter opinion sequences as in (29) below:

(29) *I presume* signalling completion of opinion sequence and turn (COCA: ABC_20/20-38)

- 1 BOB-BROWN-1-ABC-N: (Off-camera) Now, when Shaun was with the wolves, he had to maintain his scent.
- 2 HELEN-JEFFS-1SHAU: Yes.
- 3 BOB-BROWN-1-ABC-N: (Off-camera) Couldn't change clothes or bathe, *I presume*.
- 4 HELEN-JEFFS-1SHAU: Absolutely.
- 5 BOB-BROWN-1-ABC-N: (Off-camera) Did that get in the way of romance?
- 6 HELEN-JEFFS-1SHAU: Not at all. No, no.

The extract above demonstrates how the first speaker (Robert Brown) indicates the completion of his turn and his opinion sequence by putting *I presume* at the end of turn (3). The utterance itself (3) is represented by an elliptical sentence and is in fact the continuation of the previous turn of the speaker (1). It seems that Robert didn't plan to end his utterance (1), (i.e. all his utterances (turns 1, 3, 5) are 'off-camera' commentaries which seem to be one 'story' that is interrupted by Helen's short remarks), in which he expresses his opinion or assumption that Shaun Ellis had to preserve his scent being among the wolves. Moreover, a short (probably even overlapping) "Yes" inserted by the second speaker (Helen Jeffs) neither changed the 'direction' of Brown's thoughts nor interrupted him: he thus proceeded with his opinion about Shaun's scent, which was necessary for the wolves to recognise him, and completed his opinion sequence by framing the latter one (3) by the turn-final *I presume*. The completion of Brown's opinion may also be clearly seen if one follows the upcoming discussion, namely, his next turn in which he addresses a question to Helen (5): "Did that get in the way of romance?". This question and Helen's answer (6) are the beginning of a new question-answer sequence, whereas the preceding turns (1-4) were a part of the opinion sequence. Based on the above explanation of example (29), it may be stated that turn-final EFFs may signal completion of the turn, thereby acting as final frames of the opinion sequence of a speaker at a particular point in discourse.

Apart from indicating turn or sub-unit completion (e.g. in an opinion sequence) which have been illustrated in the previous examples in this Sub-subsection, EFFs may "simultaneously pursue a certain *kind* of response" (Kärkkäinen 2003: 169), more precisely a verification from other interlocutors. This "invitation to respond" (Kaltenböck 2010: 158) made by the speaker at the end of his/her turn seem to occur very often in my corpus data (cf.

Kaltenböck 2010: 158-259, cf. ‘a response eliciting function’ of clause-final *I think*; Subsection 3.7.2). The following examples (30-34) demonstrate the EFFs which have been used by the American speakers in my corpus data to signal turn completion and which are aimed at pursuing a particular response or reaction from the interlocutors.

In the first corpus extract below, example (30), the first speaker (*unknown*) marks the completion of his/her very long turn with *I presume*, at the same time referring to his/her interlocutor (Mr. Fischer), thereby expecting some kind of response from him (1). This reaction is the following: the second speaker (Mr. Fischer) verifies immediately the last utterance of the first speaker (“*You’ve got to know what you’re doing in this world, I presume*”) by exclaiming: “*Oh, absolutely*” in turn (2).

(30) *I presume* signalling turn completion and pursuing recipient verification (COCA: NPR_TalkNation-32)

- 1 (...)People are wise to be cautious about picking up mushrooms that they see in the woods, and even cooking them and eating them. You've got to know what you're doing in this world, *I presume*.
- 2 Mr-FISCHER: Oh, absolutely. It's - you know, it's - I like to compare it to parachuting. You know, packing your own chute, or using dynamite to blow up that old stump in your backyard, one mistake may be your last.

The second extract (31) has been selected to illustrate the function of EFFs under consideration because it is an illustrative example of the use of EFFs to resignal completion of the turn and concomitantly expecting a kind of validation from the interlocutor (Kärkkäinen 2003: 166-168).

(31) *I suppose* resignalling turn completion and pursuing recipient verification (COCA: NPS_AskMeAnother-30)

- 1 DAVID-GREENE: Closed on - Just don't go on Sundays.
- 2 OPHIRA-EISENBERG: Just don't go on Sundays. Good to know.
- 3 DAVID-GREENE: Right.
- 4 OPHIRA-EISENBERG: They're religious *I suppose*.
- 5 DAVID-GREENE: Very much.
- 6 OPHIRA-EISENBERG: And have you ever been on a game show before?

Excerpt (31) is taken from a discussion between David Greene and Ophira Eisenberg. Ostensibly, Eisenberg knows what she is talking about, because Greene’s turns, esp. (3) and (5), are confirmations of the preceding statements, i.e. Eisenberg’s turns (2) and (4), respectively. At the beginning, Eisenberg just repeats the statement made by Greene in turn (1) and ends it with “*Good to know*” (2). This final remark seems to indicate that her turn is complete and needs no further discussion. However, Greene inserts “*Right*” in (3) which,

apparently, does not satisfy Eisenberg or she wants to make her assumption more precise, and therefore she puts in (4): “*They're religious I suppose*”. Doing so, Eisenberg resignals the completion of her turn and renews the discussion which was concerned with the religious people who “*don't go on Sundays*”. Again, she receives verification from Greene in turn (5), which she presumably had expected from him. Finally, turn (6) shows vividly that Eisenberg's turns (2) and (4) are really completed, i.e. by turn-final *I suppose*, since it introduces a new topic and another sequence begins, more precisely a new question has been raised. It is important to note that it is this function of EFFs when they are “used to both re-signal completion of the response but also to simultaneously pursue a verifying uptake or response from the coparticipants” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 168, cf. example 76, Kärkkäinen 2003: 166-167). The given example demonstrates how EFFs may be used by the speakers to resignal turn completion and to pursue verification or certain reaction from the interlocutors.

The speakers' reactions or responses to their interlocutors' utterances/questions may have different forms, for example, as a repetition of the preceding utterance/turn as in (32) or as a specification, i.e. giving more precise definition/information as in (33) below:

(32) *I presume* signalling turn completion and pursuing recipient verification (which is presented as a repetition of this competed turn) (COCA: NPR_TalkNation-24)

CONAN: And imposed by the IRS, *I presume*.

ROVNER: Imposed by the IRS.

(33) *I presume* signalling turn completion and pursuing recipient verification (which is then produced as a specification of this competed turn) (COCA: Fox_Hume-67)

HUME: So, Maya, you're out there with the 82. You're one of the few women, *I presume*.

ZUMWALT: Yes, the only one, actually.

The examples in this Sub-subsection have illustrated how the turn-final EFFs may successfully be used by American speakers in order to signal turn completion and emphasise uncertainty, to indicate completion of opinion sequence, or to resignal turn completion and pursue recipient verification. Seemingly, turn-final EFFs used to signal turn completion and pursue some kind of response from the participants occur more often than those used to fulfil other functions of turn-final (post-positioned) EFFs in discourse. Moreover, as it will be later demonstrated in Subsection 6.7, a number of instances of final EFFs have been found in my corpus data, where they were used to elicit a certain kind of response, i.e. used in declarative questions/clauses, which, in turn, points to the tendency of the analysed EFFs in the given corpus data to be aimed at pursuing recipient verification or reaction (See also Subsection

6.4.1.3 for a detailed explanation of the functions of the turn-initial EFFs in recipient-oriented design of utterances).

In addition, as mentioned previously, the functions of one and the same EFF may overlap or be interpreted in different ways. Such ‘overlappings’ of the functions of EFFs exemplified in the present Sub-subsection will be discussed in more detail in following Subsections, esp. in Subsection 6.5.2, where some similarities between the turn-final EFFs’ interactional function of ‘signalling completion and pursuing response’ (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 161-170) and the “response eliciting function” of final EFFs (Kaltenböck 2010: 258) have been identified and illustrated with several examples.

6.5. Communicative functions of EFFs in the corpus data

The present Subsection proceeds with the demonstration of the functions of the EFFs analysed in this thesis and is similar in form to the preceding Subsection (6.4). It is focused on the illustration of communicative EFF functions as defined by Kaltenböck (2010) (cf. Subsection 3.7, and the schematic presentation in Table 1, Subsection 3.8). This Subsection presents the findings of the qualitative part of the current study and is subdivided into the corresponding Subsections according to the three communicative functions selected for the given investigation of the functions of EFFs, namely, *shield function* (Subsection 6.5.1), *structural/filler function* (Subsection 6.5.2), and the additional *approximator function* (Subsection 6.5.3). The primary goal of this Subsection is to demonstrate the variety of the communicative functions of EFFs. On the one hand, such exemplification of the functions of EFFs should complement the set of the interactional functions, e.g. more attention to the type of the scope of EFFs and determining these accordingly. On the other hand, they will reveal the possible overlappings between the multi-functional EFFs which have carefully scrutinised in this study.

6.5.1. Shield function of EFFs

As already mentioned in Subsection 3.7.1, ‘shield function’ represents a very general notion that describes the functional properties of EFFs and that may further be developed into other sub-functions (Kaltenböck 2010: 250). Being closely associated with clausal scope, the shield function of EFFs may ostensibly be attributed to the most EFFs with clausal host construction in their scope, comprising 83.5 per cent of all analysed EFFs in this study (167 clausal EFFs out of a total of 200). In order to avoid generalisations about this overall majority of EFFs, an attempt has been made to distinguish between several sub-functions, at

least those mentioned by Kaltenböck (2010), i.e. EFFs used to express “politeness and mitigation” (ibid.). Therefore, the following corpus excerpts are aimed to exemplify EFFs acting as ‘shields’ and explain their possible sub-functions which they perform in the conversation and the role they play for the speaker/s.

To take one example, the use of *I guess* in the excerpt below may be attributed to this function:

- (34) STEPHANOPOULOS: (Off-camera) I want to - I want to switch topics now. We're also seeing this week a lot of fallout from this book about the Obamas by Jodi Kantor at “The New York Times”. It finally provoked a response from the First Lady herself with Gayle King. FIRST-LADY-MICHELLE: *I guess* it's more interesting to imagine this conflicted situation here and a strong woman, you know, but that's been an image that people have tried to paint of me since, you know, the day Barack announced, that I'm some angry black woman (COCA: ABS_ThisWeek-6)

Example (34) demonstrates how the speaker (First Lady Michelle) wants to explain the “fallout from this book about the Obamas”, rather than comment on it or show disapproval of the book or its author. At the same time beginning with *I guess*, the speaker also distances herself from the whole story and then directs her personal criticism at her husband who described her as ‘angry’. Doing so, the speaker remains polite and neutral, without committing herself to the discussion of her image, allegedly created by the people. One may easily observe how the EFF in this case helps ‘protect’ the interviewee from the interviewer’s question intended to provoke discussion about the book.

In example (35), below the use of EFF *I suppose* shows the speaker’s wish to avoid responsibility to draw a conclusion whether Johnny Otis favours the signing of the other speaker/s (Etta James) or not. Using *I suppose* at the end of the clause, as if it had been the last opportunity to add his personal comment about the message and underline his uncertainty, the speaker also anticipates a positive reaction to the utterance and distances himself as interviewer from any subjective evaluation or discussion (cf. the interactional function of turn-final EFFs, viz. ‘signalling completion and pursuing response’, examples 30-33, Sub-subsection 6.4.2).

- (35) TERRY-GROSS: So you auditioned for Johnny Otis. He liked your singing, *I suppose...*
ETTA-JAMES: Right. (COCA: NPS_FreshTalk-22)

There are certainly other cases of the shield function of EFFs in my corpus data. However, due to the fact that attributing of the function of ‘shields’ to EFFs may be too general and because its more fine-grained division into other sub-functions is outside the scope of this research (due to space limitations), other cases of this function of EFFs will not

be further analysed in details. It is important to conclude that the main aim of EFFs which perform the given function ranges from the indication of the speaker's uncertainty or politeness to distancing him-/herself from the truth of the utterance/proposition and thereby mitigating his/her commitment to it.

6.5.2. Structural/filler function of EFF

Given the fact that structural EFFs are often accompanied by various disfluency markers (Kaltenböck 2010: 258), it is necessary to look more closely at the linguistic or non-linguistic units which co-occur with EFFs. Table 8 below shows the number of these elements which immediately precede or follow EFFs in the extracted corpus data.

Table 8: Co-occurring disfluency markers of EFFs in the corpus data. Source: COCA.

	Preceding disfluency markers	Following disfluency markers
Other EFFs, <i>well</i> , <i>and/well</i> +EFFs	31	3
Repetitions	2	0
Pauses (marked "--")	7	3
Interruptions/elliptic clause	0	1

Compared to Kaltenböck's (2010: 258) results, according to which disfluency features appear in 38 per cent of all cases (144 out of 379) (ibid.), the number of co-occurring (preceding and following) disfluency markers in this study is slightly lower, namely 23.5 per cent (cf. Table 9, Subsection 6.6). The difference in the findings may be explained by the fact that there are more possibilities to trace different disfluency features in the corpus used by Kaltenböck (2010), viz. ICE-GB, than in the corpus referred to in this study. For example, it has been observed that such features as hesitation sounds, etc. are not marked in COCA. Even considering that preceding pauses are predominantly marked in COCA as "--" (7 instances), only 3 cases have been found where EFFs have been followed by pauses. The most frequent preceding disfluency markers are various EFFs, e.g. *I mean*, *you know*, etc. as in (36a)), *well* (36b) or combinations of *well/and* and other EFFs (36c) (overall 31 instances); which are followed by the cases when EFFs are preceded (36d) (7 instances) and followed by pauses (36e) (3 instances) or other EFFs (36f). Two cases of preceding repetitions (36g) and one case of the elliptic or interrupted clauses which follow EFFs (36h) complete this list of disfluency features.

(36a) I mean, ***I suppose*** there's some significance that you're leading in both those states
(COCA: Fox_Susteren-13)

(36b) Well, ***I guess*** it's three steps forward, a couple back (COCA: ABC_ThisWeek-32)

- (36c) And, you know, **I guess** sounds like a car, but obviously, a crucial part of the nuclear power equation and a nuclear rod, a big development for Iran (COCA: CNN_JohnKing-57)
- (36d) And I -- **I suppose**, you know, we do jab them (COCA: Fox_Susteren-72)
- (36e) **I assume** -- (COCA: CNN_Velez-5)
- (36f) And **I suppose**, you know, when I travel, I want to be moved and I want to be transported, and I want to be sent back a different person (COCA: NPR_TalkNat-85)
- (36g) And -- and I suppose -- yeah, and **I suppose** you shouldn't then turn around and wonder why you're having communication difficulties with the people you actually trying to talk to face-to-face if you're texting them at eleven o'clock at night (COCA: CBS:Early-68)
- (36h) **I guess** I -- I am. (COCA_ CBS_This-45)

Apart from the above cases of the structural EFFs with different co-occurring disfluency markers, other cases of the use EFFs have been identified, more precisely, the cases when they perform various sub-functions according to their position in discourse, viz. initial, medial or final (cf. Subsection 3.7.2; Table 1, Subsection 3.8).

In their initial position structural EFFs perform the stalling function (Kaltenböck 2010: 259) as in (37) below:

- (37) KRISTOL: Right, which is wrong and which will be punished by the Marine Corps in the normal course of things. And why the secretary of state and secretary of defense have to opine on this and go out of their way to sort of make -- I mean, to make a bigger deal of it than it is - - and then --
WALLACE: **I suppose** the argument is it's another Abu Ghraib, that it's going to show the callousness or even worse of U.S. soldiers in the Arab world (COCA: Fox_Sunday-1)

As it can be seen in the excerpt above, by taking the turn and beginning it with *I suppose*, the interviewer (Wallace) is able to 'buy time' for the formulation of his new idea/argument about Abu Ghraib. Moreover, using EFFs in such conversational situations speakers cannot only delay slightly the upcoming utterance, but also alleviate disfluencies.

Concerning the cases of medial EFFs, the following three subtypes of the structural/filler function have been identified in the selected corpus data (cf. Kaltenböck 2010: 259-260). First, these have included the cases of the use of EFFs performing gap-filling function, thereby providing smooth conversational flow. Secondly, medial EFFs have tended to fulfil the linking function and concomitantly highlight thematic structure. Thirdly, being positioned in the middle of the clause, EFFs have been used by the speakers to mark the division of the units of a conversation, similar to the function of marking boundaries (Kärkkäinen 2003: 120-127; cf. Subsection 6.4.1.1). Some examples are presented below:

- (38a) THWAITES: Yeah, exactly. It's just - it's - I mean, everything we do as individuals, **I suppose**, is a kind of group effort, in a way (COCA: NPR_Science-75)
- (38b) MR-GREGORY: OK. But here's the problem. According to our polling, nearly eight in 10 Americans do not want to cut spending for Medicare, even in the name of cutting the debt.

You, ***I assume***, are not doing all of this as an intellectual exercise. You would actually like to get reform accomplished...(COCA: NBC_MeetPress-51)

- (38c) GROSS: Because your daughter had a cerebral brain hemorrhage toward the end of her life, and she was in medically induced coma for a while, her memory was not good, her comprehension wasn't good because of these medical problems, you were, ***I assume***, unable to talk about the things that you might have liked to talk with her about at the end of her life (COCA: NPR_FreshAir.84)

- (38d) (...) If you add a consultative assembly that ***I presume*** will be somehow selected by the United Nations, then you're going to increase that margin of debate that's going to be going on, and will only in a sense slow down the process until January (COCA: PBS_Newshour-57)

As noted by Kaltenböck (2010: 259), the gap-filling function of structural EFFs is associated with certain points of insertion of EFFs, e.g. “between subject and predicate, and between main verb (predicator) and complementation, and after relative elements”.

I will now start with the first one, i.e. *subject # verb phrase* (linking verb). It can be seen in example (38a) that by incorporating *I suppose* into the slot between subject and predicate, the speaker was able to introduce the topic (theme), then fill a gap while planning the upcoming explanation (rheme/focus), i.e. his own definition of ‘what is everything we do’, thereby keeping online speech production as smooth as possible. Rephrasing, repetitions and several pauses at the beginning of the speaker’s utterance indicate the efforts of the speaker to maintain this ‘smoothness’ of the conversational flow and to cope with the lack of processing time. Overall, the use of the first EFF (*I mean*) and the following *I suppose* after the subject has helped the speaker formulate the utterance within the given time and stress his own ideas/explanation. At the same time the given EFF has ensured that the conversation goes on without further disruptions and aided the speaker in avoiding repetitions or disfluencies.

Another case of the use of EFFs inserted in the similar slot as in (38a), i.e. between subject and main verb, is example (38b) where EFF *I assume* marks a ‘boundary’ between the preceding and following parts of the utterance. Taglicht (1984) labelled an EFF (‘a parenthetical’) positioned in such slots a “‘partition’, the entity by means of which the marked theme is detached” (Taglicht 1984: 22, in Ziv 2002: 3, cf. Kaltenböck 2010: 259). Following Taglicht’s (1984) terminology, Ziv (2002: 2) understands by ‘marked theme’ the constituent that precedes an EFF (e.g. in example (38b) “*you*”), which “constitute[s] a link between the utterance at hand and the adjacent discourse segment”. In the light of this it can be stated that EFF *I assume* in example (38b) is used to lay emphasis on the division between this preceding constituent (i.e. “*you*” as ‘marked theme’) and the adjacent part of the utterance (i.e.

assumption of the speaker about his/her interlocutor), as well as the following discourse segment, namely the subsequent sentence “*You would actually like to get reform accomplished*”. Thus, the main purpose of the EFF in the given point of insertion is to chunk information into smaller segments (cf. Ziv 2002: 9).

Furthermore, though Ziv (2002) summarises that EFFs may be used in discourse to aid the speakers to connect the immediately preceding constituent with the prior discourse (ibid.), it is difficult to prove that such a linkage is concerned with the previous material/information and not (or also) with the following one. In example (38b) there is only an explicit reference to the preceding information (“*problem*”) in the utterance with regard to the ‘marked theme’ (“*you*”). That’s why, it would be more practical to speak about EFFs that help link the utterance under consideration and “the adjacent discourse segment” (Ziv 2002: 2) or “the discourse within which the utterance in question occurs” (Ziv: 2002: 1). To sum up, the above function of *I assume* in example (38b) resembles the function of ‘marking boundaries’ (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 120, cf. Subsection 3.4, 6.4.1.1) and may be interpreted in terms of Ziv’s (2002) discourse linking function. These overlapping functions of one and the same EFF are quite frequent and will be further illustrated in the next examples.

In example (38c) a slightly different positioning of another EFF may be observed, where it has been inserted between main verb and its predicative complement. After a lengthy description of the situation in which the interviewee had been during a long period of time, the interviewer has been able to create a kind of transition from this ‘introductory story’ to the utterance in question (utterance where the interviewer talks to the interviewee). While referring directly to the interviewee, the interviewer organises his utterance through the introduction of the EFF between the theme (“*you were*”) and the rheme (i.e. his/her own presupposition of the result of the situation). Doing so, it became possible for the interviewer to detach one from another, viz. theme from rheme (cf. example (38b)). Moreover, taking into account that the utterance itself is quite long and extended, the use of *I assume* positioned before complementation has also been aimed at highlighting the interviewer’s prediction or assumption about the critical psychological and physical state of the interviewee (“*unable to talk*”). Such organising of the topic-comment structure with the help of EFFs in the complex utterances as in (38c) makes it easier for the interlocutor to highlight certain parts of it, divide it into smaller segments, thereby foregrounding the causality of the preceding and following events, situations, etc., and thus fostering the understanding of the whole utterance.

The third point of insertion which has been mentioned by Kaltenböck (2010: 259) and which is regarded to be typical for the medial EFFs that perform structural/filler function is

their positioning after relative pronouns/elements. Example (38d) shows the use of EFF before a relative clause and after a relative pronoun *that*. Serving as a structural device in this example, *I presume* is used to stress the boundaries between the topic (i.e. adding of a consultative assembly) and the comment (i.e. its selection by the United Nations), and to single out the parts of the structure of the relative clause (Note that the relative clause in this example is already embedded in other subordinate *if*-clause). On the whole, when used in such complex constructions, EFFs may effectively be incorporated into the utterance, thereby serving as a ‘partition’ between a noun/noun phrase and a subordinate (relative) clause, and concomitantly providing the necessary time for the speech management, i.e. planning the upcoming utterance.

Apart from the aforementioned points of insertion of structural EFFs and the functions associated with them, which have been suggested by Kaltenböck (2010: 259), there seem to be also other slots where EFFs may be used in order to perform similar functions in conversation. The examples below present EFFs which fulfil the above discussed functions, with such points of insertion as between noun and (relative pronoun) relative clause (39a) and between the subordinator (+*you know*) and subordinate clause (39b):

(39a) There will be occasions, ***I presume***, where he would disagree with the president-elect, President Obama; he will say so respectfully (COCA: NBC_MeetPress-39)

(39b) It's difficult. But she invited her over and I felt that, you know, ***I guess*** that's an opportunity to give her some insight (COCA: NBC_PrimeTime-3)

The exemplified use of EFF in (39a) shows how the speaker wanted to emphasise the boundary between the topic (or marked theme) “*occasions*” and the comment (explanation in the form of a subordinate clause), as well as to highlight the thematic structure of the subordinate clause (identifies according to Ziv’s (2002: 2-3) definition/explanation, cf. Taglicht 1984). And in example (39b) it is obvious that *I guess* and the preceding *you know* have been used as gap-fillers in order to avoid disfluencies, and at the same time to buy time to formulate his/her own feeling that the speaker had after she invited him/her.

Apart from the above cases of structural medial EFFs, there are some instances of EFFs when they are used to demarcate the beginning or the end of a certain segment of the utterance, i.e. a “communicative chunk” (Kaltenböck 2010: 260) or “bracket unit[] of a talk” (Schiffrin 1987: 31, in Kaltenböck 2010: 260). For instance, in example (40) below, the initial part of the utterance is marked off with *I suppose*. The following segment that starts with “*but*”

I do nt think” (sic.) constitutes a guesswork or assumption about the person with whom “*she*” was in the car and is deliberately separated from the preceding part of the utterance.

- (40) Somebody might have picked her up or she got in the car with somebody that she probably knows ***I suppose***, but I do nt think she would have got in the car with anybody she did nt know (COCA: CNN_Grace-41)

Similar to the examples (38 a-d) the following two examples demonstrate how one and the same EFF or a combination of several EFFs may be used as a ‘frame’ for a certain segment of the utterance, thereby detaching it from the remaining part of the utterance (cf. Kaltenböck 2010: 260).

- (41a) And these, ***I presume***, would be children who are already suffering from, *I would presume*, clinical depression...(COCA: NPR_TalkNation-60)

- (41b) STEPHANOPOULOS: (Off-camera) How does it, though, *I mean*, when I talked to the Dargers last week, they were all very clear, *you know*, all of our individual private lives are our private lives, ***I assume*** it's all the same for all of you (COCA: ABC_GMA-62)

In the first example (41a), one may see that by inserting EFF *I presume* before and *I would presume* after a part of the utterance, the speaker’s aim was to single out the middle part of the utterance, in which he/she talks about the children who are suffering. Hence, both EFFs serve as a frame for the highlighted segment of the speaker’s utterance. Moreover, example (41b) shows the variety of the forms of EFFs, more precisely, their ability to be modified or changed according to the conversational situation they are used in. In order to adapt the utterance to such particular circumstances and thereby present him-/herself less certain about the disease from which the children are suffering, the speaker has deployed the modified EFF *I presume*, namely *I would presume*. Furthermore, it may be argued that using this second EFF before the last part of the utterance (indication of the disease of the children, i.e. “*clinical depression*”), the speaker was also able to stress it. However, the main function of the EFFs in example (41b) is to establish a frame of the central part of the speaker’s message.

The “double use” (Kaltenböck 2010: 260) of EFFs in the former example may also be further expanded, building more complicated structures and emphasising more parts of the utterance. This is obvious in the second example (41b), where the speaker has made use of several different EFFs, contrary to the first example (41a) where only one and the same EFF, though slightly modified, has been used. When formulating his/her utterance the speaker used three EFFs, such as *I mean*, *you know* and *I assume* (example (41b)). The first highlighted

part of the utterance, positioned between the first two EFFs is separated from the following part that begins with “*all of your individual private lives...*”, which, in turn, is detached from the afterthought (“*it’s the same for all of you*”) by the third EFF *I assume*. It may also be added that the second EFF (*you know*) may perform a gap-filing function, whereas the other two seem to be more structural devices that help chunk the lengthy message into the smaller segments. Similar to the previous observations, there are many overlappings of the functions fulfilled by one and the same EFF.

In addition, the above discussed “special structural use[s]” (ibid.) of EFFs are similar to Kärkkäinen’s (2003) function of marking boundaries of EFFs. Overall, from the numerous examples above, it is obvious that EFFs may successfully be used either to fill a gap while planning what to say next, thereby ensuring smooth conversational flow, or to highlight certain segment of the utterance or its thematic structure, as well as to mark off the beginning or end of the concrete part of the utterance, thereby dividing it into shorter parts.

The aforementioned communicative functions of initial and medial EFFs are not the only ones which have been identified in the given corpus data. As mentioned in Subsection 3.7.2, there exist also various functions of final (i.e. ‘clause-final’) EFFs. Kaltenböck (2010: 258) mentions that final EFFs tend to mark the end of the turn, thereby fulfilling a “response eliciting function” in discourse. When signalling the completion of the speaker’s turn, final EFFs help him/her invite the interlocutor to react to the utterance and consequently to make a response. Doing so, some EFFs may concomitantly aid the speaker in protecting him-/herself from the evaluation of the utterance or taking the responsibility for the own judgement about the truth of it. This has already been demonstrated in the case of EFFs acting as ‘shields’ (cf. example (34), Subsection 6.5.1). Another overlapping of this function of final EFFs has been evident in the case of the interactional function of turn-final/post-positioned EFFs, viz. that of ‘signalling completion and pursuing response’, which has been elaborated by Kärkkäinen (2003: 161-170, cf. Subsection 6.4.2). So, this Kaltenböck’s communicative function seems to be very similar to the Kärkkäinen’s function of ‘post-positioned’ EFFs. More precisely, performing this function, EFFs are likewise used to indicate turn completion and pursue a response. However, the interactional function of final EFFs proposed by Kärkkäinen (2003: 161-170) implies that apart from signalling the completion of the turn EFFs may also serve to mark the completion of opinion sequence, or resignal turn completion and pursue recipient verification, as well as additionally emphasise uncertainty of the speaker. These subtle differences between the functions of the final EFFs are best seen in Subsection 6.4.2, where several examples are provided and explained in detail (cf. examples 26-33).

In the light of the aforesaid, there is no clear-cut distinction between the communicative (Kaltenböck 2010) and the interactional (Kärkkäinen 2010) functions of EFFs. Overall, the overlapping functions of EFFs make it difficult for a researcher to indicate strict boundaries between the various functions in one and the same example.

6.5.3. Approximative function of EFFs

In order to complete the picture of the identified communicative functions (Kaltenböck 2010) of EFFs in the current study, this Subsection overviews the approximative function of EFFs.

As already discussed in Subsection 3.7 the approximative function of EFFs, proposed by Kaltenböck (2010: 250-255, cf. Table 1) is an additional function in the set of the functions selected for this study. It is associated with phrasal scope of EFFs, which occur in the contexts with the indications of numbers or dates, etc. In the same Subsection I have also predicted that the approximative use of EFFs might be thus very rare in my corpus data. Indeed, the results of the analysis confirmed my predictions. First of all, taking into account that only about one-seventh of all analysed EFFs appear with phrasal scope and that the discussions of American TV-shows do not usually deal with numbers or suchlike terms, the instances of the approximative EFFs in the data are scarce. Secondly, the number of the cases where EFFs act as ‘approximators’ has further decreased, since only certain points of insertions of EFFs with phrasal are attributed to their approximative use (Kaltenböck 2010: 251). In his ‘*Monosemous account of the functions of parenthetical I think*’ Kaltenböck (2010: 265) indicates that EFFs which perform the approximator function are mostly positioned in the middle of the clause, especially within noun or prepositional phrase (Kaltenböck 2010: 265, Figure 10.9). In my data there are 19 medial EFFs with phrasal scope, from which only 4 are inserted within a noun phrase, and 2 within a prepositional phrase. After a close consideration of these few cases of the use of EFFs with phrasal scope no indication of approximation has been found.

The results of the above observations notwithstanding, I suggest looking at one example where EFF *I presume* has been positioned differently, more precisely, have clausal scope instead of phrasal one, i.e. inserted within a verb phrase (verb phrase # adjunct (PP)):

- (42) I just want to let you know, we're being told the sentence is to be read by the jury or by the judge, ***I presume***, at 4:00 Eastern (COCA: CNN_Politics-73)

One may notice that in the example above EFF *I presume* is positioned before the indication of time. This medial EFF with phrasal scope indicates the speaker’s doubt about the time of the pronouncement of the sentence, signalling lack of precision. It seems that that the use of EFF in example (42) may be attributed to the approximative one (cf. Kaltenböck 2010: 250-

255). However, it would be premature to argue that EFFs perform approximative function in the given example, because its identification depends considerably on “the type of host [an EFF] has scope over and to what extent it lends itself to scalar implicature” (Kaltenböck 2010: 255). Moreover, it is difficult to differentiate between this function and the shield function, which lies predominantly in the difference “between semantics and pragmatics” (ibid.). In addition, it has been shown in Subsection 3.4 that some interactional functions proposed by Kärkkäinen (2003: 129), viz. the marking boundaries function of framing subsidiary information and expressing uncertainty (cf. Telljery 399–408), are likewise performed by EFFs to signal uncertainty of the speaker. There is also a direct correlation between the approximative function (Kaltenböck 2010) and function of EFFs as ‘metalinguistic monitors acting as ‘approximators’ (Erman 2001: 1341).

6.6. Collocations/preceding linguistic elements

This Subsection presents the preceding linguistic elements of initial EFFs found in the corpus data used in this thesis. It is focused on the variety of such elements inserted before the four analysed EFFs, thereby showing how the EFFs may be combined with these elements, i.e. how they collocate with different linguistic elements or similar/same EFFs.

Table 9 below demonstrates the overall distribution of the preceding linguistic elements of initial EFFs (See Table 8 for an overview of the co-occurring (preceding and following) disfluency markers (linguistic and non-linguistic elements)):

Table 9: Collocations/preceding linguistic elements of EFFs in the corpus data, COCA.

Preceding linguistic elements	Number of preceding linguistic elements
and	17
so	6
but	1
but + vocatives	1
vocatives	2
well	4
well + I mean	1
I mean	2
you know	1
so + other EFFs + well	1
okay	1
because	1
and so	1
and + you know	1
Overall number of preceding linguistic units: (preceding pauses (5 instances) and preceding adjuncts (7 instances) are not included)	40
Initial EFFs without any preceding linguistic element:	57

As can be seen in the above table, the linguistic elements which precede initial EFFs constitute 41.2 per cent of all initial instances of the extracted EFFs (40 identified elements out of a total of 97; not included are 5 instances of preceding pauses and 7 instances of preceding adjuncts (cf. overall 109 instances of initial EFFs)). Remarkably, the initial EFFs are preceded mostly by *and* (17 instances), which is also sometimes used in combination with other EFFs, i.e. *you know* (1 instance), and *so* (1 instance), comprising overall 47.5 per cent of all preceding linguistic elements, i.e. 19 out of 40. As for the other less frequent linguistic elements, they are distributed as follows: *so* occurs 6 times before the selected EFFs in my corpus data (as well as once in combination with other EFF + *well*), followed by *well* (4 instances; and once as a combination *well I mean*); *but* and *but + vocatives* (overall 2 instances). The preceding ‘other EFFs’ are represented by *I mean* and *you know*, occurring only 3 times in my corpus data, i.e. 2 and 1 instances, respectively. Moreover, vocatives positioned before EFFs have been found in 2 examples in my corpus data (cf. 1 instance of *but + vocatives*). The rest of the preceding linguistic elements occur only once, i.e. *okay* and *because*. (Note that some of the elements which appear one time in my data have already been mentioned in the discussion above, namely, while talking about the combinations of *and*, *so* and *well* with other elements).

It should be noted that only initial EFFs have been analysed for the presence of a preceding linguistic element, the co-occurring elements of medial, final EFFs and the linguistic elements that follow EFFs are not taken into account in the present thesis, except for some disfluency markers (cf. Table 8), Subsection 6.5.2.

Based on the observations of Table 9, it may be concluded that initial EFFs may not only be used separately, but also be preceded by different linguistic elements, e.g. discourse/pragmatic markers, connectives, other or the same EFFs etc. This does not necessarily mean that EFFs used with other EFFs or discourse/pragmatic markers perform different functions – they do not “function in isolation from their linguistic context, but rather interact with and mutually reinforce each other” (Pichler 2009: 593, cf. Aijmer 2002, Stubbe & Holmes 1995, etc.). In other words, EFFs combined with various linguistic elements may emphasise each other, more precisely, the linguistic elements may intensify the functions which EFFs perform in discourse.

6.7. Occurrence of EFFs in declarative clauses

This Subsection presents some interesting observations made in the course of the analysis of the four selected EFFs, namely, the instances of the EFFs which appear in declarative clauses in the corpus data extracted for the current investigation.

In my corpus data there seems to be a general trend towards the use of EFFs to introduce declarative content clauses with the omitted conjunction *that*, which are aimed at eliciting the expected answer. To put it simply, a number of cases have been found in my corpus data, where EFFs have been used to introduce a declarative clause, the answer to which is expected/presupposed or the confirmation for which is asked. Declarative clauses may be used “(with appropriate intonation in speech) to express questions” (Biber et al. 1999: 203). But since it is not possible to analyse the intonational contours of the corpus excerpts in COCA, I have identified the cases in which EFFs have been used in declarative questions according to their form, i.e. those instances that are marked by a question mark at the end of the clause, but which has the form of a declarative clause.

Before moving on to the exemplification of the EFFs used by American speakers in declarative clauses in the given data, it should be noted that “declarative questions cannot be used “out of the blue”” (Gunlogson 2002: 124). In other words, they depend on the context in which they occur and may be inappropriate or even “odd” if they are used without any preceding discussion” (ibid.) about the issue under consideration. Thus, the following extracts below will be presented within a larger context.

The first example (43) illustrates one of the instances of initial EFFs (viz. *I assume*) when they are used to introduce a declarative question (indicated by a question mark), being closely connected with the preceding discussion (turn 1):

(43) *I assume* introducing a declarative question (COCA: NPR_TalkNat-83)

- 1 CAIN: It was kind of a misfortune. I was going to school. I was living off of my GI Bill. My VA rep at my school quit, and they didn't have a replacement or a stand-in, and over the course of about four months, that was the source of my livelihood. I eventually had to move out of my apartment, and that's where it all began.
- 2 CONAN: So moved out of your apartment. *I assume* you tried to stay with friends or family?
- 3 CAIN: Yes, sir, I stayed with one of my - actually both of my sisters. They really didn't have space for me, and they tried to help as much as I could, but, you know, I eventually got into my car just to not put anybody out.

In the second part of turn (2) of the extract above, one may observe the EFF *I assume* used as a frame of the declarative question, which is closely connected not only with turn (1) of the first speaker (Cain), but also with the initial part of Conan's turn (“*So moved out of your*

apartment”). Moreover, as already mentioned, the occurrence of EFFs in declarative questions is often associated with the upcoming expected/presupposed answer from the interlocutor, which is also the case in example (43), where the following response by Cain (3) represents a kind of validation of the declarative question raised in (2). Overall, the above example of the use of the EFF may also be interpreted both as an introducing frame of a declarative question and as a way to pursue recipient verification (or a certain type of response or a positive reaction to the utterance) (cf. discussions and examples in Subsections 6.4.2 and 6.5.1; cf. Kaltenböck 2010: 158-259, ‘a response eliciting function’; Subsection 3.7.2).

The afore-mentioned speaker’s expectation of his/her interlocutor’s validation, may also mean that the interviewees have an idea what they will be asked for and what type of questions the interviewers may put to them. Such instances have already been illustrated in the previous Subsections (both in the case of initial and final EFFs), but it is necessary to show how EFFs are used for this purpose in declarative clauses. The next extract (44) demonstrates how the interviewer (Snow) frames her declarative question with *I assume* (1) (between the subject and the main verb), the response to which is made by the interviewee Mr. Levy (2), who rejects it by providing the correct description of the chain:

(44) *I assume* positioned medially in a declarative clause (COCA: NBC_Dateline: 55)

- 1 SNOW: And the chain, *I assume*, has a big lock on it?
- 2 Ms-LEVY: Actually it had like a small lock.
- 3 SNOW: (Voiceover) The knitting needles were too large to pick that lock. Was there another way? She'd thought about it a hundred times, but now desperation sparked creativity...

Another example of another EFF is given below, where it is inserted at the end of the turn (1), thereby framing a declarative question and being aimed at asking for confirmation, i.e. at pursuing a positive response to it. Example (45) also shows that Conan’s (interviewer) question was not prepared, because he uses other EFFs, namely he inserts two times *you know*, and he also repeats some of the parts of the utterance (i.e. restarts): “*whoever, you know, whoever is, you know,...*”). The response to the interviewer’s question is made by the interviewee Mr. Jennings in (2), who confirms it by “*It’s true*” (contrary to example 44):

(45) *I suppose* positioned turn-finally in a declarative clause (COCA: NPR_TalkNation: 36)

- 1 CONAN: But ordinarily, at this point in the game, you'd be rooting for whoever, you know, whoever is, you know, furthest away, *I suppose*?
- 2 Mr-JENNINGS: It's true. You know, anybody who can take out the leader, that's who's on your side.

Based on the examples and their explanation above, it may be concluded that EFFs have often been used by American speakers in my corpus data to frame declarative questions (in about 5 per cent of all the analysed excerpts, incl. 4 instances of tag questions, e.g. “*This has never happened before I presume, right?*” (COCA: CBS_Early-23)), thereby pursuing a certain type of response or getting recipient verification (i.e. validation/a positive response/confirmation), and being closely associated with the preceding discussion, positioned either turn-initially, turn-medially or turn-finally (Note that only those instances have been taken into account which have been indicated by a question mark). In addition, it should be noted that the corpus data analysed in this thesis have demonstrated that the interviews provided by COCA may sometimes look like a prepared discussion. However, this should not be taken as a rule, because the majority of the transcribed texts selected for this thesis are comprised of naturally occurring conversations, where both interviewers and interviewees have discussions with each other on different topics without being really ‘prepared’ to ask a certain question or provide a particular answer to it.

7. Conclusion

The present research paper has examined the use and functions of EFFs in the American English conversational discourse. In order to investigate these formulaic expressions a *formulaicity* lens has been employed, i.e. the focus of the present study was on formulaic features which characterise the formulaic use of EFFs, such as high frequency, *zero-complementiser*, positional mobility, as well as the newly emerged pragmatic functions.

The analysis of the most recent 200 occurrences of the four EFFs, viz. *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I presume* and *I assume*, in the spoken part of COCA has shown how formulaic these under-investigated EFFs (with the exception of *I guess*) are. They seem to have become ‘fixed formulae’ (Thompson 2002: 139), as evidenced by a number of formulaic features identified in the corpus data (e.g. frequent use, *zero-complementiser*, positional mobility). Moreover, the analysis of the functions of EFFs has revealed that they perform various pragmatic functions. In addition, the results of the analysis of the four selected EFFs have shown that all of them (with the exception of *I suppose*) are predominantly used in the spoken section of COCA (e.g. *I guess* 59.5 per cent). This may be explained by the fact these formulaic phrases help the speakers produce fluent and native-like language (cf. Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992; Wray 2002; Schmitt & Carter 2004, 2010) and have become highly routinised “tools for social interaction” (Wray & Perkins 2000:13), and are thus used in the majority of cases in conversations.

The methodology adopted in this thesis was a combination of the quantitative and qualitative methods, which enabled to answer research questions raised in the thesis (Subsection 1.2). Naturally occurring spoken data (the most recent 200 corpus excerpts), extracted from COCA and rigorously coded according to the coding schema developed for this study, have been used to conduct a quantitative investigation of the given EFFs, i.e. their frequency, distribution in the corpus, positions, points of insertion and the type of their scope. All of these have been identified, statistically evaluated and presented graphically. The same data have also been used for the qualitative analysis, aimed at determining, exemplifying and interpreting the interactional and other communicative functions of EFFs that they fulfil in conversations. It should be noted that due to corpus and thesis limitations, as well as due to the multifunctional (often overlapping) character of the functions of EFFs and their problematic (not strictly definable) identification, no exact calculations of the functions of EFFs have been made in this study. Thus, the primary aim of the functional analysis of EFFs in the present study was to illustrate the interactional and other communicative functions of EFFs, proposed by Kärkkäinen (2003) and Kaltenböck (2010) (Section 3, esp. Subsection 3.8).

The findings of the quantitative analysis have demonstrated that the four selected EFFs are used quite frequently by the American speakers in conversational discourse, especially *I guess* (21,434 times). Furthermore, they are used more frequently without *that*-complementiser than with it. For example, the overall frequency of *I assume* in COCA is 1,205 (as CTP-phrase), from which 759 instances are initial ones, and 563 instances from which, in turn, are used with *zero*-complementiser. This means that *I assume* is used in COCA in 74.2 per cent of all initial cases without *that*-complementiser. Similarly, *I presume*, occurring 247 times in COCA (its overall frequency as CTP-phrase), is used in 72 per cent of all cases with *zero*-complementiser, i.e. 64 instances of initial *I presume*+*zero*-complementiser of a total of 89 initial instances of *I presume*) (Subsection 6.1).

It is important to note that the exact overall frequency of the initial instances of only these two EFFs (*I assume* and *I presume*) has been calculated (out of all its initial occurrences in the spoken part of COCA), whereas the other two EFFs (*I guess* and *I suppose*) have been only filtered out according to the specific parameters (Table 4a, footnote ¹) without being divided into initial, media or final instances. The reasons for such ‘division’ of the EFFs analysed lies, on the one hand, in different frequencies of some of the EFFs (*I guess* with 21,434 instances vs. *I presume*, occurring 247 times in COCA), and, on the other hand, in the resulting extremely time-consuming process of sorting out all initial EFFs from the medial

and final ones and then the initial ones with *zero*-complementiser from those with *that*-complementiser, because it can only be done manually. But, taking into account that the least frequent EFFs analysed (*I assume* and *I presume*) appear in the majority of cases without *that*-complementiser, and that over half of all EFFs analysed are positioned initially, it may be argued that EFFs indeed tend to be followed by *zero*-complementiser rather than by *that*-complementiser (cf. Thompson 2002: 139). The absence of *that*-complementiser points to the distinct feature that characterises the formulaic use of EFFs and which has been traced in the given corpus data.

Apart from the frequent use of EFFs and their use with *zero*-complementiser, positional mobility, one of the key characteristics of EFFs as formulaic phrases, was also investigated in the present study. The results of the examination of the positions of EFFs within the associated clause/clause fragment/phrase have shown that the given EFFs are used not only initially (54.5 per cent), but also medially and finally, 27.5 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively. Besides, it has been observed that there is a predominance of initial EFFs with clausal scope over medial and final EFFs with clausal scope, and that phrasal EFFs tend to be positioned medially rather than initially or finally (cf. Subsection 6.2).

As regards the results of the analysis of the points of insertion of clausal and phrasal EFFs, they indicate that there exist an almost unlimited number of the various slots within the associated clause (or clause fragment/phrase), in which EFFs may be inserted by the speakers (Subsection 6.3). This is also supported by the fact that apart from the slots which have already been identified in the previous studies (Kaltenböck 2010), several new slots have been found in this thesis, e.g. the use of phrasal EFFs after particle *to* and before the verb in infinitive form (cf. *Special cases*, Table 7).

The results of the qualitative analysis have shown that EFFs are highly multifunctional formulaic phrases with a “high degree of functional flexibility” (Kaltenböck 2010: 264). They substantiate the results of the investigation into the ‘interactional’ and ‘communicative’ functions of another EFF, viz. *I think*, conducted by Kärkkäinen (2003) and Kaltenböck (2010). According to the observations made in this thesis, EFFs are able to perform a wide range of functions which depend more on the context, viz. verbal co-text in which they occur, than on the positions in which they appear or the scope they have over the associated clause/phrase. Due to the variety of these contextual and situational discourse environments in which EFFs may occur, the multifunctional character of EFFs and the possible overlapping of some of their functions, it is not possible to subsume all newly emerged functions of EFFs under one overarching function. That is why this thesis attempted to illustrate at least the most

prototypical functions of initial, medial and final EFFs. The following functions of the four selected EFFs have been identified in the corpus data and will be presented in the next paragraphs.

Initial EFFs extracted from the spoken part of COCA have been used by the American speakers to frame the speaker's upcoming utterance (especially an answer to a question), mark the starting-point of the speaker-perspective, make the utterances less direct and abrupt (thereby avoiding a face threat to the interlocutors), bring in a new/different slant in the utterance/answer with regard to the prior turn, concomitantly reformulating/correcting, or introducing the inappropriateness/incorrectness of it. Moreover, initially positioned EFFs were often used as a starting-point in the recipient-oriented design of utterances, aimed at pursuing a certain type of response or reaction, and, at the same time, avoiding evaluations or explicit personal judgment of the other speaker or his/her actions/ utterances. Fulfilling shield function, initial EFFs were used to help 'protect' one of the speakers from the question of the other speaker intended to provoke a discussion. Structural EFFs in the initial positions, in which they were used with a number of various co-occurring preceding disfluency markers, have also been identified, as well as the cases of performing the 'stalling function' (sub-function of the structural function, Kaltenböck 2010: 259). Initial EFFs serving as boundary markers, or frames of an upcoming answer are quite rare in the given corpus data. Similarly, EFFs which were used to mark the starting-point of the speaker's disaligning perspective regarding the prior turn (only one case) occur infrequently.

As for medial EFFs, they tend to perform three subtypes of the structural/filler function (cf. Kaltenböck 2010: 259-260), namely the gap-filling function, thereby providing smooth conversational flow; the linking function, thereby concomitantly highlighting thematic structure; and the function of marking the division of the units of a conversation (cf. the interactional function of marking boundaries (Kärkkäinen 2003: 120-127). Similar to the previous studies (Kaltenböck 2010), the analysis of medially positioned structural EFFs has shown that they are associated with certain points of insertion of EFFs, in which they mark a 'boundary' between the preceding and following parts of the utterance, i.e. chunking information into smaller segments (cf. Ziv 2002: 9). Apart from the points of insertion, e.g. *subject # verb phrase*, indicated by Kaltenböck (2010: 259), several other slots, in which EFFs were inserted by the American speakers, have also been identified in the present study. They include those between noun and (relative pronoun +) relative clause, between the subordinator (+*you know*) and subordinate clause. Furthermore, it has been observed that medially positioned EFFs are used quite often as gap-fillers in order to avoid disfluencies,

and, at the same time, to buy time to formulate the upcoming utterance. In addition, some EFFs, either alone or as a combination of several EFFs, have been used to demarcate the beginning or the end of a certain segment of the utterance, thereby detaching it from the remaining part.

Taking into account that only 36 instances of final EFFs (of a total of 200) have been found in the corpus data, it would be premature to make any generalisations or indicate any functional trends of final EFFs. But it is important to note that according to the results of the analysis in this study, they also perform a wide variety of functions in conversational discourse. Final EFFs are mostly used to mark the completion of turn, of some sub-unit in the speaker's turn, or of an opinion sequence, thereby showing some degree of uncertainty (or some degree of it). When signalling the completion of the speaker's turn, final EFFs have often been used to pursue recipient verification (cf. interactional function, Kärkkäinen 2003), i.e. fulfilling a "response eliciting function" Kaltenböck (2010: 258). Doing so, EFFs may also be interpreted as 'shields', which aid the speaker in protecting him-/herself from the evaluation of the utterance or distancing him-/herself from the truth of the utterance/proposition. Such cases, when several interpretations of one and the same function of EFFs are possible, point to the possible overlapping of the functions of EFFs.

The above functions of EFFs have been attributed to the four selected EFFs according to the context and the position in which they occur in the corpus data. However, this does not mean that these functions may only be performed by initial, medial and final EFFs. Quite the contrary, being positioned medially, EFFs could possibly fulfil the functions of final or initial EFFs, or the functions that are different from the aforementioned ones, or their functions may even overlap. The results of the analysis of the functions of EFFs in the current study indicate that there is a relatively limited interrelationship between the functions of EFFs and the positions they take within the clause/phrase, though some functional trends have been identified (cf. discussion above).

The same is true of the semantic-pragmatic scope which EFFs have over a clausal or non-clausal construction. Even if some of the functions of EFFs were closely associated with the clausal scope e.g. shield function, it was nevertheless not possible to attribute them to all 167 clausal EFFs (out of 200). Thus, it may be suggested that the scope of EFFs does not determine the functioning of EFFs in discourse (even the only case of the approximative function of EFFs in the given corpus data had clausal, not phrasal scope, as defined by Kaltenböck (2010: 250-255)). In the light of the foregoing, it is also clear that the role of EFFs

is not limited to the functioning within a clause or phrase – EFFs function “at the level of discourse” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 184).

In addition, some interesting observations have been made in the course of the analysis of the four selected EFFs. First, the results have shown that initial EFFs may also be preceded by different linguistic elements (41.2 per cent), e.g. discourse/pragmatic markers, connectives, other or the same EFFs etc. This means that EFFs can successfully be combined with various linguistic elements, thereby mutually reinforcing and complementing each other. Secondly, in the given corpus data EFFs seem to be often used to introduce declarative clauses, aimed at eliciting the expected answer, irrespective of the positions which EFFs take within the clause, i.e. initial, medial or final.

This study provides new insights into the way the American speakers use EFFs in conversations. However, there are still many linguistic issues to be considered and further investigated. The corpus data used, the selected EFFs and the focus on the spoken American English are far from exhausted. Moreover, due to the thesis and corpus limitations, some aspects remained unaddressed, e.g. the examination of the intonational contours and prosodic realisation of EFFs, the analysis of EFFs within situational and social context, etc. It would also be very interesting to examine other EFFs or similar formulaic phrases, using much more corpus excerpts or even alternative data sets from other corpora in order to compare the use of each of them across different data sources. Besides, a cross-linguistic corpus study or a comparative analysis of EFFs in spoken and written speech could be carried out in order to trace the differences across various languages and genres. Overall, broadening the scope of corpus-based research into formulaic language would help develop new areas of investigation and expand the role of formulaicity in linguistics.

By looking at EFFs through the lens of formulaicity and investigating their use and newly emerged functions, this study has made a useful contribution to research into formulaic language. Moreover, I hope that this thesis has also made a valuable contribution not only to the understanding of the use of EFFs in conversational discourse, but also to the understanding of the phenomenon of *language* and its role in verbal communication. In addition, this study provides linguists with the data and useful findings which may be used for other studies or comparative analyses, as well as for language teaching and learning. Finally, it has been proven that EFFs, as a lot of other formulaic phrases, have become exceedingly common and highly routinised in conversational discourse, the emerging patterns of which open up new opportunities for future research.

8. References

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Corpora used in this study:

The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), 450 million words, 1990-present. Created by Davies, Mark. (2008-). Available online at <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>.

9. Appendix

9.1. Interactional functions of EFFs (Kärkkäinen 2003)

Table 10A: Interactional functions of pre-positioned EFFs: starting-point function – marking boundaries (Kärkkäinen 2003)

Starting-point function – marking boundaries (Kärkkäinen 2003: 120-127) The cases exemplifying turn-initial EFFs which perform the <i>starting-point</i> function (i.e. marking boundaries), thereby framing an aside, an upcoming answer, an upcoming opinion sequence or subsidiary information (and uncertainty) will be presented below:
⇒ <i>EFFs framing an aside</i> EFFs may be used to denote a start of an aside occurring in an extended turn (Kärkkäinen 2003: 121, see provided examples 56 and 57, Kärkkäinen 2003: 121-123). For instance, often speakers seem to be not sure about something and at this moment they insert an aside, a kind of a ‘self-repair’, e.g. if they then suddenly realise that this is really so as they thought, etc. (Kärkkäinen 2003: 122, example 56). In addition, Kärkkäinen (2003: 121) notes that such cases differ from those ones, when the speaker is uncertain or has doubts, because she stresses the given function of an EFF performed within an aside itself, i.e. ‘pre-positioning’ the turn. Another case of framing an aside is similar to providing an additional information “inserted in the main story”, as indicated by Kärkkäinen (2003: 123, cf. example 57). Even when this information may seem to express a not precise indication of something (e.g. <i>price</i>) or be additionally ‘ornamented’ by other linguistic means that indicate uncertainty (e.g. <i>around</i> or <i>something like that</i>), there are cases of the use of EFFs framing an aside when they are “part of a frame created by the speaker” in order to foreground the additional information that will be important and “relevant for the story line” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 123) later. Being used at the beginning of an aside, EFFs act as a “conversational frame, a starting-point” of it, which may or may not be additionally emphasised by other EFFs or discourse particles (e.g. <i>well</i>) (Kärkkäinen 2003: 123). Overall, the consideration of the conversational situation, the coherence of the story and the relevance of the intertwined turns within an extended turn are important for the identification of this function.
⇒ <i>EFFs framing an upcoming answer</i> The EFFs acting as the starting-point of an upcoming answer serve as a part of a frame which “marks a transition to answering the original question presented earlier in the discourse” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 124). This shows that the cases when EFFs are used to frame an upcoming answer are similar to those when the speakers use them to frame an aside, since they both mark a starting boundary in the discourse. Kärkkäinen (2003: 124-125) provides an example (58) with the help of which she demonstrates how EFFs are used mark a starting-point “at a boundary in discourse” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 124). Interestingly, since a turn where the exemplified EFF (<i>I think</i>)

occurs, begins with such a discourse marker as <i>but</i> , which marks “a transition, a return to an earlier point”, EFF itself “faces forward, acting as a starting-point of the speaker’s personal perspective, from which the final answer is formulated” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 126).
⇒ <i>EFFs framing an upcoming opinion sequence</i> Another possibility of fulfilling the starting-point function is framing an upcoming opinion sequence. Similar to the two previous cases (framing an aside and an upcoming answer), EFFs which frame an upcoming opinion also establish a “part of a frame at a point of transition in discourse” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 126). The researcher notes that in the cases of “unelicited opinion” (ibid.) EFFs may be used with other discourse markers or other EFFs (e.g. <i>you know</i>). Building such pairs, they represent “a frame that indicates that an opinion[...] is about to follow, at a point in discourse where the opinion and the upcoming sequence constitute a slight shift in topic” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 127, cf. example 59, Kärkkäinen 2003: 126).
⇒ <i>EFFs framing subsidiary information (and expressing uncertainty)</i> The cases when EFFs mark boundaries and at the same time show the uncertainty of the speaker are quite rare (Kärkkäinen 2003: 129). In such conversations speakers insert some additional information, thereby using EFFs “very locally” (ibid.), i.e. as referring only to a part of a clause (e.g. nominal phrase in the scope), and emphasising (again) that they are not sure whether the information they provide may be regarded as precise or relied on. Doing so (cf. example 60), the speakers tend to use other markers or linguistic devices (e.g. <i>or something</i>) in order to highlight that the information is indeed only subsidiary, if pertinent at all, and represents only a rough estimation (ibid. cf. ‘approximative function’ Kaltenböck 2010: 252).

Table 10B: Interactional functions of pre-positioned EFFs: starting-point function – routinely bringing in speaker perspective (Kärkkäinen 2003)

Starting-point function – routinely bringing in speaker perspective (Kärkkäinen 2003: 130-142) In Kärkkäinen’s study, EFFs (i.e. <i>I think</i>) have been found to be used by speaker to achieve the following goals within sequential environments: bringing in a different slant in an answer, second assessment, a second opinion sequence, or introducing a disaligning second opinion, prefacing weak agreement (and subsequent disagreement), as well as dealing with unclear import of previous turn or prefacing second assessment.
⇒ <i>EFFs bringing in a different slant in an answer</i> EFFs that are used to ‘routinely bring in speaker perspective’ may do this by bringing in a new perspective when the speaker is answering a question. What is important is that this answer presents some information which was not indicated in the question, i.e. ‘unasked’; or introduces “a slightly different slant to the original issue in the question” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 131). The identification of such cases of the use of EFFs may be problematic because they are similar to the

afore-discussed instances of EFFs used to mark an upcoming opinion sequence (cf. Table..). The difference between the both cases lies in the ability of EFFs (in the former case) to help the speaker provide or ‘pre-position’ an additional information (i.e. a ‘different slant’), even if it was not required by the situation or by the interlocutor (e.g. while answering a question) (Kärkkäinen 2003: 130-131, cf. example 61).
⇒ EFFs bringing in a different slant in second assessment EFFs may also introduce a different slant in second assessment, especially when they denote that the preceding assessment was not precise enough and some additional a little different point of view will/may be expressed by the interlocutor (Kärkkäinen 2003: 131-132, cf. example 62). This different slant brought with respect to the previous (first) assessment, may encourage the interlocutor to extended the conversation reflecting this newly introduced perspective or information in second assessment (ibid.).
⇒ EFFs bringing in a different slant in second opinion sequence The cases when EFFs are involved to ‘bring in a different slant in second opinion sequence’ represent a kind of exchange of the speakers’ opinions. In the course of these opinion sequences one speaker, for example, expresses his or her own point of view, and after having heard the other idea (proposed by another speaker), he or she seems to agree with it, thereby concomitantly giving a “slightly different slant” to it (Kärkkäinen 2003: 132-133, cf. example 63, Kärkkäinen 2003: 133). In these cases one may observe certain changes in the articulated opinions between the interlocutors in turn sequences when both give their points of view, whereby the one conveys his or her opinion almost agreeing with the previously uttered point of view but adding a different (or perhaps a kind of modified) slant to it, and pointing a start of the second opinion sequence (ibid.).
⇒ EFFs introducing a disaligning second opinion sequence Unlike the preceding case of adding a different slant to the second opinion sequence, in the given case EFFs may be used to indicate a disagreement with the other speaker(s) expressed in the previous opinion sequence. This means that the speaker marks “a starting-point for that second opinion and the speaker perspective”, thereby disaligning with the opinion other than his or her own (Kärkkäinen 2003: 136, cf. example 64). Such cases represent the situations when there are only slight, perhaps implicit, differences in the points of view in a discussion/conversation between the speakers, and when EFFs are used to introduce the beginning of these ‘disaligning’ turns (ibid.).
⇒ EFFs prefacing weak agreement (with subsequent disagreement) The cases of EFFs ‘prefacing weak agreement’ with a potential for developing into a disagreement present much higher degree of the disalignment than in the cases when EFFs are used to ‘introduce a disaligning second opinion sequence’. When EFFs “mark the starting-point of the speaker’s inserted new perspective” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 137) that introduces weak argument or

disagreement, the speakers usually do not fully agree with the idea or issue expressed in the preceding turn. Moreover, as demonstrated in example 65 (Kärkkäinen 2003: 137), the instances of EFFs under consideration may also be emphasised by other epistemic markers (e.g. *probably*), which shows the “speaker’s unwillingness to make more than a partial concession” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 137). On the whole, doing such a ‘preface job’ or “acting as a disagreement preface” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 136) , EFFs seem to be very frequently used linguistic means of marking the starting-points in the turns, in which the speaker expresses his or her attitude (agreement or disagreement of different degrees) towards the issue raised by the interlocutor.

⇒ EFFs dealing with unclear import of previous turn

In the given cases EFFs are used in situations when “the interactional meaning or import of the previous turn is not quite clear” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 138). The researcher provides two examples of such cases, where the speaker has either to cope with “the interactional problem of a question that was inappropriately framed and simultaneously shift towards establishing the relevant facts” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 138, cf. example 66), or with unclear previous turn, about which he or she is unsure, and thus shows no definite acceptance or agreement about it (Kärkkäinen 2003: 138-139, cf. example 67). In these examples EFFs are used “as a starting-point for the speaker’s personalized perspective” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 139) within a particular sequential environment, i.e. “in conclusory comments (after a request-compliance sequence, whose significance is not clear to the current speaker, or analyst)” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 142).

⇒ EFFs prefacing second assessment (in Pomerantz’s (1984) ‘agreement’ turns)

An additional case of the starting-point function of EFFs has been discussed by Kärkkäinen (2003: 141-142) in her study, but has not been found in her data. It is concerned with an exchange of the opinions between the speakers, who are thereby making their judgements about the issue under discussion and concomitantly reinforcing each other, building the so called ‘*agreement*’ turns or series (cf. Pomerantz 1984: 66, in Kärkkäinen 2003: 141). In the provided example (68), an EFF (*I think*) is used as a preface to the speaker’s second assessment (after having agreed with the idea in the previous turn), providing “a personalized starting-point for the assessment, marking the current speaker’s slight shift in perspective” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 141-142). Finally, such cases are certainly also interesting for the current thesis, offering supplementary cases of the starting-point function performed by EFFs, and therefore will be taken into consideration in the course of the analysis and interpretation of my corpus data.

Table 10C: Interactional functions of pre-positioned EFFs: recipient-oriented design of utterances (Kärkkäinen 2003)

Recipient-oriented design of utterances (Kärkkäinen 2003: 146-156) The cases of the use of EFFs in ‘the <i>recipient design</i> of discourse’, where the speakers try to design or re-design their utterances, are presented below and include the following cases: pursuing a certain type of response, displaying uncertainty and showing solidarity towards recipient, and responding to inappropriate alignment by displaying heightened commitment (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 146-156).
⇒ <i>EFFs pursuing a certain type of response</i> There are situations when the one speaker contradicts the issue uttered by the other speaker in the preceding turn, thereby asserting something opposite or different and at the same time requiring “a certain kind of agreeing response” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 147). This pursuing of a desired response pre-framed by an EFF is one of the cases of their use of EFFs for designing the recipient-oriented utterances. Kärkkäinen (2003: 147) claims that in her data (<i>ibid.</i>, cf. example 69) EFFs seem to express certainty of the speaker, rather than his or her doubt. It is necessary to differentiate between the aforementioned case of EFFs used for routinely bringing in a starting-point for the speaker perspective and the current case. Though the both situations in which EFFs are used by the speakers may seem to be similar, they differ in that they mark assertions about different aspects of the conversation. More precisely, in the former case the speaker expresses his or her assertion, assessment or attitude towards the issue or thing referred to in the prior turn, whereas in the later case the speaker does so with respect to the interlocutor’s past behaviour, qualities, etc., “which may potentially constitute a high face threat to that participant” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 148).
⇒ <i>EFFs displaying uncertainty and showing solidarity towards recipient</i> The speaker may use EFFs not only for designing recipient-oriented and but also for response-requiring utterances which show additionally his or her solidarity towards the interlocutor. Importantly, as postulated by the researcher, this function is performed by EFFs when the speaker wants to demonstrate him- or herself “as uncertain in order to show social solidarity” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 152). In the example given by the researcher (example 70, Kärkkäinen 2003: 150), EFF <i>I think</i> occurs “in a response to a certain kind of challenge that clearly requires a response” (<i>ibid.</i>). One of the speakers (Angela) tries to avoid this challenge (i.e. an embarrassing situation in the past) and presents herself as “forgetful and uncertain” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 151) about her action/reaction about the past situation, thereby expressing her solidarity towards the interlocutor. This vividly reveals that the speaker pays attention to the interlocutor’s “face wants, i.e. the need to retain a positive self-image for herself, and redesigning and fine-tuning the emerging meaning of her utterance to convey this solidarity” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 151). The researcher demonstrates the advantages of such strategy of dealing with similar conversational

situations, citing Goodwin (1987), who postulates that “displays of forgetfulness and uncertainty not only enable a speaker to display to others some of the information processing, or other “backstage” work involved in producing an utterance, but also provide participants with resources for shaping their emerging interaction” (Goodwin 1987: 115–116, in Kärkkäinen 2003: 151). Moreover, using such techniques in conversation speakers are also able to assure that the conversation can nevertheless go on without any misunderstandings between them (ibid.). In the discussed case one can see that EFFs are excellent linguistic means to be used by the speakers in certain situations to express uncertainty and/or forgetfulness and thereby showing solidarity towards the recipients.

⇒ EFFs responding to inappropriate alignment by displaying heightened commitment

Example (71) provided by Kärkkäinen (2003: 152-153) demonstrates a conversational situation, called ‘troubles talk’ (Jefferson & Lee 1981), in which there are the interlocutors who have to “align themselves as troubles-recipients” and who give advice or suggest something, and there are the ‘troubles-teller’ who immediately reject it, especially if it is premature (Jefferson & Lee 1981: 407, in Kärkkäinen 2003: 154). This tendency of rejecting advice observed by Jefferson & Lee (1981: 410, in Kärkkäinen 2003: 154) may be explained by the fact that the troubles-teller enjoying his or her status as a troubles-teller may lose it after an advice given by the troubles-recipients; thus he or she strives not only for the safety of his or her status, but also for “the status of the talk as troubles-telling”. EFFs seem to be used to emphasise the utterance, because they help react to “the perceived inappropriate alignment of the other participants” (ibid.). Example 70 has also shown that EFFs display the speaker’s “strong certainty” and are primarily used “to take part in displaying the heightened involvement and commitment of the speaker in the subject matter” Kärkkäinen (2003: 156).

Table 11: Interactional functions of post-positioned EFFs – signalling completion and pursuing a response (Kärkkäinen 2003, cf. separate IU Kärkkäinen 2003: 161)

Signalling completion and pursuing a response (Kärkkäinen 2003: 161-170)

It should be noted that the post-positioned cases of EFFs will be regarded as turn-final occurrences in this study, contrary to Kärkkäinen’s treatment of them as separate intonation units. As for the cases in which post-positioned EFFs have been found in the research study by Kärkkäinen (2003), they include instances of turn-final EFFs which were used for signalling turn completion (and emphasising uncertainty), completion of opinion sequence and for resignalling turn completion and pursuing recipient verification (Kärkkäinen 2003: 161-170).

⇒ ***EFFs signalling turn completion (and emphasising uncertainty)***

As concluded by Kärkkäinen, EFFs that occur turn-finally indicate “completion of the turn by way of indicating uncertainty” (cf. Ford & Thompson 1996: 170, in Kärkkäinen 2003: 93). Similar interactional work done by post-positioned EFFs has also been noted by the researcher while analysing them as individual intonation units, which mark apart from pragmatic and grammatical completion also the intonational one (Kärkkäinen 2003: 162). This signalling of turn completion with the speaker’s uncertainty concomitantly emphasised by means of EFFs is illustrated in example (74), where the analysed EFF (*I think*) is positioned after the noun phrase, and “uttered as potential turn-final” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 164); and where “the speaker simultaneously chooses to emphasize her uncertainty about the information given and thus instructs the recipient to interpret it in this light” (ibid.).

⇒ ***EFFs signalling completion of opinion sequence and turn***

As pointed out in the previous examples the uncertainty of the speaker is usually explained by the prosodic emphasis on a certain EFF (Kärkkäinen 2003: 164). However, it is not a requirement for EFFs to be able to frame the completion of a turn (ibid). Therefore, despite having less accentuation (e.g. only secondary accent), EFFs may still act as ‘final frame’ showing the speaker’s lesser degree of uncertainty (e.g. “when the speaker is providing a second opinion about content of which she is fairly certain” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 169, cf. example 75). Such cases are labelled by Kärkkäinen (2003: 164-165) as simply ‘signaling completion of opinion sequence and turn’. It may be concluded that EFF perform this function and work as ‘a final frame’ demonstrating completion of “sub-unit or sequence or activity in the speaker’s turn” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 165).

⇒ ***EFFs resignalling turn completion and pursuing recipient verification***

As postulated by Ford and Thompson (1996: 170, in Kärkkäinen 2003: 169), there are situations when the speaker aims to get an understanding from other interlocutors or invites them to evaluate what was said (e.g. discussed activity, etc.), at the same time expecting uptake, which may be either imprecise or delayed. Moreover, if it does not take place at all, the speaker “extends the original turn in a manner that will signal or re-signal completion” (ibid.). It is this function of EFFs when they are “used to both re-signal completion of the response but also to simultaneously pursue a verifying uptake or response from the coparticipants” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 168, cf. example 76, Kärkkäinen 2003: 166-167). Overall, this use of post-positioned EFFs show that they frame final turns, thereby either signalling or resignalling their completion in pursuit of “a certain kind of response” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 169).

9.2 Abstract

This thesis investigates the use and functions of the four ‘epistemic formulaic fragments’ (EFFs), viz. *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I presume* and *I assume*, in American English conversations. The aim of the study is to explore the peculiarities of the use of these highly routinised and frequently used phrases, by foregrounding the features which characterise their formulaic use. More precisely, the thesis tries to trace formulaic features in the use of EFFs, e.g. high frequency, positional mobility, *zero-complementiser*, and in their functions. The study is based on 200 naturally occurring instances extracted from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and implements methods of quantitative and qualitative analyses. The findings of the study indicate that EFFs are indeed used as formulaic expressions quite frequently in conversational discourse, predominantly without *that-complementiser*. The analysis of the corpus data has shown that EFFs are positionally mobile and may be inserted into a wide variety of slots within the associated clause/phrase. The four selected EFFs are used for different purposes in conversations, ranging from framing/marketing the upcoming utterance, fulfilling the structural/gap-filling/linking function, to the signalling the completion of the turn, thereby pursuing recipient verification/response. In addition, the results have shown that initial EFFs are often preceded by different linguistic elements, such as discourse/pragmatic markers, connectives or other EFFs etc. EFFs may also be effectively used to introduce declarative clauses/questions. Overall, the current study demonstrates the formulaic and multifunctional nature of the selected EFFs and shows how these independent positionally mobile phrases are used increasingly frequently as fixed formulas without *that-complementiser* in the spoken American English.

9.3 Abstract in German (Zusammenfassung)

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit untersucht die Verwendung und die Funktionen der vier „epistemischen formulaischen Fragmente“ (EFF), *I guess*, *I suppose*, *I presume* und *I assume*, anhand von Konversationen in amerikanischem Englisch. Das Ziel der Studie ist, die Besonderheiten in der Verwendung dieser routinehaften und häufig gebrauchten Ausdrücke zu erforschen, und dabei die Eigenschaften, die ihren formulaischen Gebrauch charakterisieren, in den Vordergrund zu stellen. Im Speziellen, versucht diese Diplomarbeit, die formulaischen Eigenschaften von EFF zu untersuchen, wie z.B. deren große Häufigkeit, positionelle Mobilität, Auslassung des *that*-complemetiser. Die formulaischen Eigenschaften werden auch in ihren Funktionen genauer Betrachtung unterzogen. Die vorliegende Studie basiert auf 200 natürlich vorkommenden Korpusbeispielen aus dem *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA) und wertet diese sowohl mit quantitativen und qualitativen Methoden aus. Die Ergebnisse der vorliegenden Studie zeigen, dass die EFF tatsächlich als formulaische Ausdrücke in Konversationen sehr häufig vorkommen, dabei überwiegend ohne *that*-complemetiser. Die Analyse der ausgewählten Korpusdaten zeigt, dass EFF positionell mobil sind und in einer Vielzahl von „slots“ im zugehörigen Satz eingefügt werden können. Die vier ausgewählten EFF werden für verschiedene Zwecke in Gesprächen verwendet, wie z.B. für ‚Framing‘ oder das Anzeigen einer kommenden Äußerung, als strukturelles Füllelement oder Verknüpfungselement, dem Signalisieren der Beendigung des Gesprächsbeitrages, sowie dem Elizitieren einer Reaktion des Gesprächspartners. Darüber hinaus, zeigen die Ergebnisse, dass EFF in Anfangsstellung oft von verschiedenen Sprachelementen, wie Diskursmarker/pragmatischen Marker, Konjunktionen oder anderen EFF etc. begleitet werden; und dass EFF auch effektiv zur Einleitung von deklarativen Fragesätzen verwendet werden können. Zusammengefasst ist festzustellen, dass die vorliegende Studie den formulaischen und multifunktionalen Charakter der ausgewählten EFF darstellt und dabei zeigt wie diese Phrasen zunehmend oft als festgelegte unabhängige und positionell mobile Formeln ohne *that*-complemetiser im gesprochenen amerikanischen Englisch verwendet werden.

9.4 Curriculum vitae

Natalia PICHLER

Education

10/2011 – 04/2015	<u>University of Vienna</u> / Austria Master study: English Language and Linguistics
10/2009 – 09/2011	<u>Vienna University of Economics and Business</u> / Austria University Certificate Program in Advertising & Sales ❖ Qualification: Academic Marketing and Sales Manager
09/2003 – 07/2007	<u>Dnipropetrovsk National University</u> / Ukraine Bachelor study: English Language and Literature

Work experience

06/2014 – present	Office manager <u>Scythian Consulting GmbH</u> , Vienna
05/2014 – 06/2014	Personal assistant & head secretary <u>Aichholzer e.U.</u> , Vienna
03/2012 – 11/2013	Au pair , Lower Austria (a part-time job during the studies)
05/2009 – 04/2011	Personal assistant & head secretary <u>Aichholzerbau GmbH</u> , Vienna
03/2008 – 03/2009	Au pair , Lower Austria
09/2006 – 03/2008	Marketing manager <u>InText Translation Company</u> , Ukraine
06/2007 – 01/2008	Freelance marketing researcher <u>EASTWARDS - opening markets in Central & Eastern Europe</u> , Gent / Belgium
06/2006 – 09/2006	Camp Counselor <u>Camp "Nicolet"</u> , Wisconsin / USA
02/2004 – 10/2005	Administrative assistant, & translator/interpreter <u>Vladislav Company</u> , Ukraine

Further training:

2011	<u>IELTS English-Language Test</u> , Munich / Germany ❖ Overall score: 7,5
04/2009 – 07/2009	<u>German language course Wirtschaftssprache C2</u> (IKI Institute, Vienna)
10/2008 – 01/2009	<u>German language course Oberstufe C1</u> (University of Vienna)
03/2008 – 06/2008	<u>Austrian language diploma, level B2</u> (Baden, Volksschule ÖSD) ❖ Final score: "Very good"

Languages:

- ☒ German (fluent in speaking and writing)
- ☒ English (fluent in speaking and writing)
- ☒ Russian, Ukrainian (mother tongues)
- ☒ Spanish (basic level)