Accepting while Shifting: The Discourse Marker <u>tov</u> ('okay, fine', lit. 'good') in Israeli Hebrew Talk-in-Interaction

Yael Maschler
University of Haifa, Israel

1. **Introduction**

The Hebrew word <u>tov</u> is listed in the dictionary as an adjective meaning 'good', as an adverb, a noun, a verb, and as a 'word of agreement and affirmation' meaning 'yes, fine'.   All of these uses, including the last one, are found already in Biblical Hebrew. The present study focuses on this last meaning of <u>tov</u> in Israeli Hebrew casual conversation, as well as on another meaning, not listed in any of the dictionaries. In both of these uses, <u>tov</u> comprises a discourse marker.

A <u>discourse marker</u> is defined as an utterance fulfilling two conditions:
a) <u>Semantically</u>, the utterance must have a *metalingual interpretation* in the context in which it occurs.   In other words, rather than referring to the extralingual world, it must refer metalingually to the realm of the text ['textual discourse marker'], to the interaction between its participants ['interpersonal discourse marker'], or to their cognitive processes ['cognitive discourse marker'].
b) <u>Structurally</u>, the utterance must occur at intonation-unit initial position, either at a point of speaker change, or, in same-speaker talk, immediately following any intonation contour other than continuing intonation. It may occur after continuing intonation or at non intonation-unit initial position only if it follows another marker in a cluster (Maschler, 2002: 2).
a) and b) coincide for 94% of the discourse markers throughout the corpus.

Whereas <u>tov</u> of 'agreement and affirmation' functions in the interpersonal realm of the interaction, the discourse marker <u>tov</u> in its other use (that which is unattested in the dictionaries) functions in the realm of the text.

For an example of the interpersonal function, examine excerpt (1) from a conversation between two women in their early twenties. Yafit is attempting to begin a story about a pair of shoes she found on one of her shopping trips, while Meirav wants to know first how much they cost:

(1) 'New Shoes[1]':
      25 Meirav: <u>kama</u>   'alu?
                           how much [did they] cost?
      26 Yafit: <u>xip</u>
                                      I loo
      27   <u>re--ga</u>.
                    [just a] sec.
      28   . . <u>'ani 'agia leze</u>.
                      I'll get to it.
      29 Meirav: <u>'im 'at   lo   'omeret kama</u>   'alu,
                         {--------------------*laughing*-----------------}
                       if   you don't tell   how much [they] cost,
      30   <u>'i   'efshar   lehitrakez</u>.
                    {-----------*laughing*-------}
                    it's impossible to concentrate.
      31 Yafit: <u>'ani 'agia</u>.
                                  I'll get [to it].
      32   <u>takshivi</u>!
                    listen!
      33 Meirav: **<u>tov</u>**.
      34 Yafit: <u>halaxti</u>,
                    I went,
      35   <u>xipasti   na'alayim</u>.
                    looked [for] shoes.

Meirav humorously tells Yafit that unless she tells her first how much the shoes cost, she won't be able to focus on the story. Yafit promises her again that she'll *get to it* (line 31), and asks her to listen to the story from its beginning with <u>takshivi</u>! ('listen!', 32). Meirav agrees to this request with <u>tov</u> (33), and Yafit begins the story. This <u>tov</u>, then, refers not to the extralingual world, but rather to the realm of the interaction between participants, and it appears at intonation unit initial position at a point of speaker change.

This use of <u>tov</u> is equivalent to the English use of *okay* to affirmatively respond to a request, as described e.g., by Schegloff, 1968; Merritt, 1978; Condon, 1986; and Beach, 1993.

Whereas interpersonal <u>tov</u> is employed by the recipient, textual <u>tov</u> is used by the speaker. In excerpt (2), for example, two archeology students at the University of Haifa are discussing a paper they were assigned concerning an ancient city of their choice in the region. They are making fun of the strange names some of these cities have (Constantinople, Serageyopolis). Ami then jokingly tells Liraz to let their professor know that he'll be writing his paper on the 'ancient' city of Haifa. This should suffice, he adds, because Haifa, too, has a 'strange' name:

(2) 'Archeology':
      114 Ami: . . <u>tagidi lo</u>,
                    tell   him,
      115   . . <u>she'ani 'ose 'avoda</u>,

---

[1] Transcription conventions follow Chafe, 1994, with a few changes:

! -- exclamation mark at end of line -- sentence final exclamatory intonation

ø -- lack of punctuation at end of line -- a fragmentary intonation unit, one which never reached completion.

Primary and secondary stresses are not marked.

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                              {---laughing---}
                     that I    am doing a paper
                     that I'll be writing a paper,
116              'al xeifa,
                 on Haifa,
117 Liraz:       (laughs)
118 Ami:         . . she/??/
                    that /??/
119              (laughs)
120              . . . gam kaxa,
                    also this way
                    this way too,
121              . . ze shem meshune.
                   {------laughing------}
                   this strange name
                   it's a strange name.
122              {laugh} 'ani nish'ar                bexeifa.
                            I'm staying with [the topic of] Haifa.
123 Liraz:       (laughs)
124 Ami:         . . . . . tov,
125              'az legabey hanose hasheni--,
                 so   concerning the topic the second
                 so about the second topic,
126              . . . 'eh . . ze-- ha--'inyan haze,
                    uh . . it's  the issue  this
                    uh . . it's this issue,
127              shel ha--,
                 of   the,
128              . . . . yom hastudent.
                    day  of the student
                    Students' Day.
129 Liraz:       . . . ma   'ito?
                    what with it
                    what about it?
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Upon completing the topic of the archeology paper (line 122), and following laughter on both sides and a long pause, Ami switches to the new topic of Students' Day celebrations on campus. The transition is prefaced by tov, appearing in a discourse marker cluster (Maschler 1997) along with 3 more markers: 'so, about the second topic, uh' (lines 125-6). Tov functions here in the textual realm, marking the move to the new topic. From the definite article in **ha**nose **ha**sheni ('**the** second topic', line 125), we learn that a second topic had been on the speaker's agenda for a while, rendering the transition at line 124 an expected one for the speaker.

This, too, is reminiscent of descriptions of the English discourse marker *okay*, which, in addition to its interpersonal uses, also 'marks the transition across [the] boundary as a default or expected one' (Condon, 2001: 496). This tov, too, refers not to the extralingual world. Rather, it functions in the realm of the text to mark the beginning of a new conversational action, and it appears at intonation unit initial position in same-speaker talk, following final intonation (line 122).

Hebrew tov and English *okay*, then, are equivalents of each other in at least the two functions of agreement and transition to an expected course of action. To be sure, English *okay* has entered the Hebrew discourse marking system just as it has in many other languages. Upon initial examination, it seems to function in Hebrew in these two functions as well. However, tov

is almost 4 times more common than 'okey throughout the corpus, and further study is needed in order to characterize the difference between them. From a linguistic point of view, tov has the advantage of being easily traced back to a particular lexeme, which *okay* does not.

The question is, how might a particular utterance come to have both interpersonal as well as textual functions? I wish to explore here the functions of tov in Israeli Hebrew casual conversation, in order to reveal the functional itinerary followed by this discourse marker, thus contributing to cross-language studies of grammaticization of discourse markers (e.g., Fleischman & Yaguello, 1999; Traugott & Dasher, 2002).

2. **Data**

The study is based on the Haifa Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew (Maschler, 2004) which I have been collecting over the past decade. At the time of this study, it comprised audio-recordings of 50 conversations transcribed following Chafe 1994, between friends and family relatives, constituting approximately 157 minutes of talk among 124 different speakers. Altogether, 60 tokens of the discourse marker tov are employed in this corpus, and they are distributed among the functions given in the following table:

(3) Functions of *tov* throughout the database

Interpersonal tov	Textual tov - Transition into following action	Textual tov - Closing current action	Ambiguous between interpersonal/textual tov	Total
28 (46.7%)	21 (35%)	2 (3.3%)	9 (15%)	60 (100%)

We see that almost half the tokens (46.7%) function interpersonally, whereas a little over a third function textually (most of them, 35% to begin the following action, and only 3.3% to close the current one). Another 15% of the tokens are ambiguous and function both in the interpersonal and the textual realms. It is these ambiguous cases that are particularly helpful in tracing the connection between the interpersonal and textual functions of tov.
Let us examine the functions of tov in more detail.

3. **Interpersonal *tov***

Interpersonal tov is employed in this corpus by the recipient, and it is used to express:
1) agreement to action
2) acceptance of some state of things
3) third-turn reciept
4) concession, often preceding a 'but' response
 5) ironic agreement, i.e., disagreement.
The first category, 'agreement to action' was illustrated in excerpt 1. Let us examine some of the other categories.

3.1. *Acceptance of Some State of Things*

Just as a recipient can agree to some course of action, they can also agree to, or accept a description of some state of things. In excerpt (4), for instance, Yonat tastes some Pomelos, which Gila, her hostess, oferred her:

(4) <u>'Sofas'</u>:
 56 Yonat: . . . <u>'oy</u>,
 57   (slight laughter)
 58   . . . <u>tipa mar</u>,
       drop bitter
       a bit bitter,
 59   . . <u>hayiti</u> /mexana 'et ze/.
       I would /call it/
       I'd say.
 60 Gila: (laughs)
 61   **tov**,
 62   <u>'az bo'i</u>,
       so come
       so let's,
 63   . . <u>'ani 'eten lahem 'od 'eize</u>,
       I'll give them another,
 64 Yonat: . . . . <u>yom yomayim</u>,
       day two days
       day or two,
 65 Gila: le . <u>le'esof ktsat pazam mashehu</u>.
      to to gather some time something
      to become more ripe.

After tasting the fruit, Yonat announces that it's kind of bitter. To this Gila responds with some laughter and a <u>tov</u> (line 61), accepting Yonat's description of the state of the fruit. Indeed, following another discourse marker, <u>'az</u> ('so', line 62), she proceeds to suggest that they allow the fruit a few more days to ripen.

3.2. *Concession*

<u>Tov</u> can be employed by a recipient to pay lip service towards accepting some state of things. In these instances, it is often immediately followed by a 'but' response. The result is a fleeting concession of the state of things as described by the interlocutor. In excerpt (5), for instance, an interaction between Orit and her parents, the mother is in the middle of a story, when the father suddenly interrupts with a question concerning the tape recorder:

(5) <u>'Family Gossip'</u>:
 192 Mother: . . <u>ma 'od hu 'amar</u>,
      what else he said
      what else did he say,
 193 Father: <u>tagidi</u>,
          tell (fem. sg.) me,
 194   . . <u>'at hexlaft po batariya</u>?
       you changed here battery
       did you change batteries here?
 195 Orit: . . <u>lo</u>.
       no.
 196 Father: . . . <u>'at yoda'at shehadavar haze 'oved</u>
       you know that the thing the this works
       you know that this thing works
 197   . . . . <u>'ani ganavti 'et ze</u>,
       I stole this,
 198 Mother: <u>'ani be'emtsa mishpat</u>.
       I['m] in [the] middle of [a] sentence.
 199 Orit: <u>'ima be'emtsa</u>

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                                          Mom['s] in [the] middle of
200            {laughter}
201  Mother:  . . 'ani   mishtaga'at mimxa!
                   I'm going crazy from you
                   you're driving me crazy!
202  Father:            tov 'aval  ze   nora   xashuv,
                        tov  but  it's  terribly important,
203            lada'at    'et ze.
               to know  this.
204  Orit:      {laughter}
205  Father:    {laughter}
206            . . . beshiv'im veshmone,
                   in seventy eight,
207            ganavti 'et ze mime'ir 'adiv,
               I stole  this   from Meir Adiv,
208            . . meshumash.
                   used.
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When the father continues the tape recorder topic (lines 196-197), both mother and daughter overlap, objecting that the mother was *in the middle of a sentence*. The mother then adds an expression of her annoyance at the situation *'you're driving me crazy!'* (line 201), which the father overlaps with *'tov but it's terribly important, to know this'*, at 202. With this tov, the father accepts the state of things as described by mother and daughter, and pays lip service towards acknowledging the inadequacey of his interruption. His acceptance is quite momentary though -- it is immediately followed by 'aval ('but'), a humorous justification of his behavior (*'it's terribly important to know this'*), and a continuation of the topic of the tape recorder.

    Concessive tov is not always followed by an explicit 'but'. In excerpt (6), Orna describes some old fashioned medicine in the form of mustard powder mixed with water, which her mother recommended she spread over pieces of paper and apply on her back over the lung area:

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(6)  'Old Fashioned Medicine':
    42  Orna:    . . . . velasim 'et ze,
                         and to put it,
    43            'al ha--,
                  on the--,
    44            re'ot.
                  lungs.
    45            . . . me'axora?
                         from the back?
    46  Xava:                    nu[2],
                                 yeah,
    47            vema     ze 'ose?
                  and what it  does
                  and what does it do?
    48  Orna:    . . . hi 'omeret,
                       she says,
    49            z
                  i
    50            ze,
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[2] For a study of the Hebrew discourse marker nu ('yeah, go on'), see Maschler, 2003.

	it,
51	<u>sofeax xom</u>,
	gathers heat,
52	<u>ze lokeax 'et kol hahitkarerut</u>.
	it takes all the cold
	it makes the entire cold go away.
53	. . . /<u>maher</u>/,
	/quickly/,
54	/<u>maher</u>/,
	/quickly/,
55	<u>'amarti le'ima sheli</u>,
	{------*smiling*-------}
	I said to mother my
	I said to my mother,
56	**<u>tov</u>**,
57	<u>'ani lo ya'ase 'et ze</u>.
	I won't do it.

Following the mother's constructed dialogue (Tannen, 1989) concerning the benefits of this medication (lines 49-54), Orna reports, again in constructed dialogue, her response to her mother in a smiling tone: '*I said to my mother*', <u>tov</u>, '*I won't do it*', lines 55-57. <u>Tov</u> here does not accept the mother's advice even momentarily, as it is accompanied by a smile and a declaration of its unacceptability. It functions concessively, as in ***despite what you say***, or even ***contrary to what you say***, *I won't do it*.

3.3. *Ironic Agreement: Disagreement*

For some readers, <u>tov</u> of the previous excerpt will be interpreted with a certain degree of irony -- the irony of a daughter ridiculing her mother's unacceptable suggestions. The irony expressed by <u>tov</u> of excerpt 7 is unquestionable. This is a 1994 political argument at a family meal between right-leaning (Likud party supporter) father and left-leaning (Labor (Ma'arax) party supporter) son, concerning the peace agreement with Jordan just signed by the labor government:

(7) 'Political Argument':

4	Gabi:	<u>bentayim</u>,
		meanwhile,
		<u>mi shedafak 'et tahalix hashalom</u>,
5		he who screwed up the process peace
		those who screwed up the peace process,
6		<u>xamesh 'esre shana</u>,
		[for] fifteen years,
7		. . . <u>ze halikud</u>,
		are the Likud,
8		<u>lo ha--</u>
		not the--
9	Shani:	<u>ta'avir li t'apire</u>?
		pass me the puree?
10	Gabi:	. . <u>lo hama'arax</u>.
		not the Ma'arax.
11	Father:	<u>ze naxon</u>,
		it's true,
12		. . <u>halikud</u>,
		the Likud,

13   'asu 'et ze.
                did it.
14   . . . 'aval,
                     but,
15   (3.5) ze lo   'omer,
                     this doesn't mean,
16   shegam hama'arax,
                that also the Ma'arax,
17   lo   'osim 'et ze.
                aren't doing it.
18 Gabi: bentayim,
                                                so far,
19   hem 'osim yafe me'od,
                they're doing nice very
                they're doing very well,
20   . . 'im 'efshar   letsayen.
                   if   it's possible to remark
                   if I may say so.
21 Father: . . . 'aval /????/
                     but /??????/
22 Gabi: / bentayim hem/ menahalim 'et hamasa umatan bexoxma.
                /so far they're/ carrying on the negotiations   with wisdon
                /so far they're/ carrying on the negotiations skillfully.
23 Father: **tov**.
                                                        {*sarcastic tone}*
24   . . . . 'okey.
                             {*sarcastic tone}*
                             okay.
25 Gabi: . . . . 'atá lò   maskím 'iti,
                       you don't agree   with me,
26   . . shehaheském   hateritoryali,
                   that the agreement the territorial,
                   that the territorial agreement,
27   'im yardén,
                with Jordan,
28   hu mutsláx?
                is successful
                is good?
29 Father: . . . 'im 'anì lo maskim 'itxá,
                     if   I   don't agree with you,
30 Shani: todá. {*to Mother, concerning the food being passed}*
                                thank you.
31 Father: . . . . 'im 'anì lo   maskim 'itxá,
                       if   I don't agree   with you,
32   . . . 'ata titén li lehagìd 'et da'ati?
                     you will let me say my opinion
                     will you let me express my opinion?

At lines 18-22, Gabi claims, in a rather agonistic tone, that so far the Labor has been carrying
on the negotiations quite skillfully. To this, the father responds with a sarcastic <u>tov</u> (line 23)
followed by a long silence and a sarcastic <u>'okey</u> ('okay', 24). With these two tokens, the father
clearly does not agree with his son that the Labor is carrying on the negotiations with Jordan
skillfully. Gabi's continuing talk '*you don't agree with me...*' (lines 25-28) is evidence that
this was Gabi's interpretation at the time of the argument. The father's response '*if I don't
agree with you ...*' (lines 29-32) is evidence that this was the father's interpretation at the time

as well. Thus, this <u>tov</u> (as well as the <u>'okey</u> of line 24) is a token of ironic agreement, or rather disagreement.

As mentioned earlier, all tokens of interpersonal <u>tov</u> are employed by the recipient. Let us now examine textual <u>tov</u>.

4. **Textual *tov*: Marking Expected Transition**

Textual <u>tov</u> is employed by the speaker to mark transitions:
1) at beginnings of major topics, whether narrational or elicitational
2) between the episodes and sub-episodes of a narrative
3) to return to an action which has been interrupted
4) at the end of a topic/action.
We have seen an example of textual <u>tov</u> beginning an elicitational topic (excerpt 2). Because of space limitations, I will not illustrate any of the other categories here.

5. **Ambiguous Cases: Between Interpersonal and Textual *tov***

In 15% of the cases throughout the database, <u>tov</u> functions both interpersonally and textually. These tokens are generally employed by the recipient, who responds to the speaker and at the same time also intitiates a move on to the next episode/action.

5.1. *Acceptance of Some State of Things + Transition into Following Episode/Action*

For example, in excerpt (8), an interaction between two women in their early forties, Nurit tells Sara about the dealings her husband had with various medical doctors while they were on vacation. In this section of the story, they are on the phone with their family practitioner, who is wondering why the husband's lab test results are not in yet:

```
(8)  'Doctors':
     129  Nurit:     . . hu 'omer,
                         he says,
     130              ma      ze,
                      what['s] this,
     131              'eyn totsa'ot!
                      no     results!
     132              . . ma..masartem  beyom xamishi,
                          y..you handed [the culture] in on Thursday,
     133              . . ze tsarix lihiyot,
                          it   has to be [in],
     134              hatosta'ot!
                      the results!
     135              . . . yom shishi,
                              Friday,
     136              yom Shabat,
                      Saturday,
     137              yom rishon,
                      Sunday,
     138              . . ts'xot lihiyot kvar hatosta'ot.
                          must be       already the results
                          the results should be in already.
     139  Sara:                              naxon.
                                             right.
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140  Nurit:      . . tov.
141                     ten   li    ta'telefon shelxa,
                        give me the phone yours
                        give me your phone number,
142                     . . 'ani 'avarer.
                           I'll   find out.
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In lines 130-138, comprising the constructed dialogue of the family practitioner, the doctor calculates the days that have elapsed since the culture was taken and concludes that the results should have been in already. At 139 Sara, the recipient of this story, agrees with the doctor's conclusion, and Nurit continues the story at 140 with the doctor's constructed dialogue: '*tov. give me your phone number, I'll find out'*. This <u>tov</u> comprises the doctor's acceptance of the situation (i.e., that there still are no results although they should have been in already). At the same time, it begins a new episode in the story, the episode describing a new action of the doctor's -- requesting their phone number.

5.2. *Concession + Transition into Following Episode/Action*

In a study of agreement adverbs such as German *natüralich* or Bavarian *fei* in the position preceding the front-field of the finite German verb ('the pre-front field'), which is a preferred locus of grammaticization (Hopper, 1987), Auer writes:

> Semantically, these pre-front field agreement adverbials and tokens often preface a possible counter-argument, which the speaker presumes to be relevant in some kind of imagined dialogue with a partner who is not necessarily identical with the one co-present. This counter-argument, although it has not been made by the other party, at least not explicitly and not in the prior turn, is taken up and 'agreed with' in a yes-but strategy (1996: 316-317).

In excerpt (6), 'Old Fashioned Medicine', lines 56-57, we saw that a real, not an imagined dialogue was reported, and the counter-argument was made via <u>tov</u>: *<u>tov</u>, 'I won't do it'*, or **'contrary to what you may assume**, *I won't do it'*.

Auer's analysis is relevant to the final excerpt, (9), in which a mother tells her husband and daughter about moving her old mother to a new appartment:

```
(9) 'Grandma Can't Remember':
     10  Mother:    . . . xamishim shana,
                           fifty years,
     11                    hi   xaya  sham  be
                           she lived  there  on
     12                    . . behamelex jorj.
                              on King    George [street].
     13                    . . . ze   lo   kal,
                                it's not  easy,
     14                    le'isha        mevugeret,
                           for an older woman,
     15                    pit'om     la'avor  dira.
                           to suddenly move apartments.
     16  Father:                                     naxon.
                                                     right.
     17  Mother:    . . tov 'anaxnu 'azarnu,
                        tov  we     helped,
     18                    veze       ve
                           and so on and
```

19	. . <u>veyom</u>
	and [a] day
20	. . . . <u>yom lofney haha'avara,</u>
	[a] day before the move,
21	. . . . <u>'ani hayiti sham 'ita,</u>
	I was there with her,
22	. . . <u>ve . . sax hakol haya mesudar,</u>
	and all in all was arranged
	and all in all things were arranged,
23	. . . <u>vehe'evarnu,</u>
	and we moved [everything],
24	. . . <u>venixnasnu . . habayta,</u>
	and we came into the home,
25	. . . . <u>ladira,</u>
	to the appartment,
26	. . . . . <u>vepit'om betsura me'od meshuna,</u>
	and suddenly in form very strange
	and suddenly in a very strange way,
27	. . . <u>hi sho'elet 'oti,</u>
	she asks me,
28	. . . <u>ma 'anaxnu 'osim po</u>?
	what [are] we doing here?

This <u>tov</u> can be interpreted as part of an imaginary dialogue, in which the speaker assumes that some interlocutor says that *it's not easy for an older woman to suddenly move apartments*(lines 13-15), <u>particularly with no help</u>. The imaginary argument, that the grandmother had no help 'is taken up and countered by the speaker with a yes-but strategy': '*<u>tov</u> we helped*', line 17, in other words, 'yes, you may assume we did not help, but we did', or '**contrary to what you may assume**, we helped'. This <u>tov</u>, then, presents a counter-argument to a possible imaginary argument, that the speaker assumes is relevant in an imaginary dialogue with some interlocutor.

With this example of imaginary dialogue, we begin to see how a metaphorical extension of the primary interactional usage of the agreement token <u>tov</u> 'opens the way to [grammaticization] into a connective with quasi-conjunctional function' (ibid.: 317).

However, <u>tov</u> of excerpt 8 also has a textual function, because it constitutes the beginning of a new sub-episode in the orientation to the narrative: Whereas earlier the narrator described the Grandmother's general living situation over the past 50 years, at line 17 she moves to a more specific orientation describing the day before the move. This <u>tov</u>, then, functions both as a concessive conjunction as well as a transition into the following sub-episode of the narrative.

6. **Grammaticization of** *tov*

How does a word meaning 'good' develop first into an interpersonal discourse marker and then into a textual one?

I would like to suggest that the interpersonal function developed from the basic adjectival meaning of <u>tov</u> ('good') (see figure below). It emerged through usage in metalingual utterances such as '*this is good, and therefore I agree to it / for you to continue'*. In other words, before moving on with the rest of the discourse, an agreement must be reached among its participants that they find the state of things satisfactory. This agreement can be

expressed via the nominal sentence <u>ze tov</u> ('this [is] good'), which later becomes just <u>tov</u> ('good').

(10) <u>Grammaticization of the discourse marker *tov*</u>

lexical origin 'good' ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯▶ interpersonal discourse marker⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯▶ textual d.m.

│
▼

'this is good, and therefore I agree to it/ for you to continue'

│
▼

'the state of things in the discourse so far
is good, and therefore I can continue as
expected'
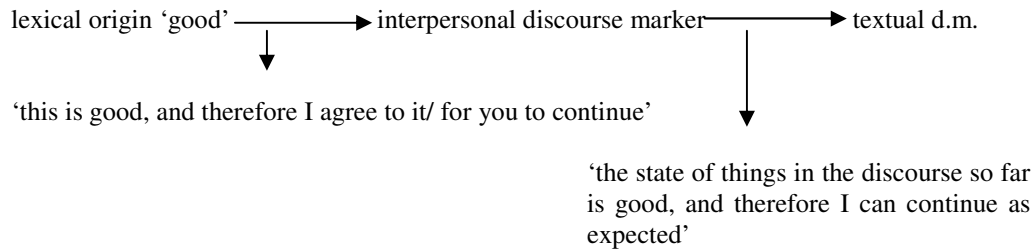
We saw Auer's suggestion (1996) concerning the imaginary dialogue with some recipient, to which the speaker responds beginning with a concessive. I would like to extend this idea of an imaginary dialogue to an imaginary **metalingual** dialogue speakers may hold with themselves prior to continuing with their discourse. A speaker may carry on **a metalingual dialogue with her/himself** and examine the state of her/his discourse thus far. If everything is satisfactory, she or he may indicate that this is so via <u>tov</u>, and move on to the next, expected action. With time, of course, this inner metalingual dialogue is not carried out at every single shift, and <u>tov</u> comes to be used unambiguously to mark expected transitions. In this way, a word meaning 'good' that had originally served interpersonal purposes comes also to serve textual functions in the discourse.

Of course, without a spoken corpus from an earlier period of the language, this can only be hypothesized. However, 'equivalents' of <u>tov</u> in other languages, also originating in adjectives meaning 'good', such as Spanish *bien* (de Fina, 1997), Bavarian German *fei* (Auer, 1996), Chinese *hao* (Miracle, 1989), as well as the Brazilian thumbs-up gesture (Sherzer, 1991) all support this grammaticization path.

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