

# *Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today (LA)*

ISSN 0166-0829

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## **Volume 226**

Discourse-oriented Syntax

Edited by Josef Bayer, Roland Hinterhölzl and Andreas Trotzke

# Discourse-oriented Syntax

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John Benjamins Publishing Company  
Amsterdam / Philadelphia



The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

## Table of contents

Issues in discourse-oriented syntax <i>Josef Bayer, Roland Hinterhölzl &amp; Andreas Trotzke</i>	1
The derivation and interpretation of left peripheral discourse particles <i>Josef Bayer &amp; Andreas Trotzke</i>	13
On the interpretation of modal particles in non-assertive speech acts in German and Bellunese <i>Roland Hinterhölzl &amp; Nicola Munaro</i>	41
Italian verb-based discourse particles in a comparative perspective <i>Anna Cardinaletti</i>	71
Italian adverbs and discourse particles: Between recategorization and ambiguity <i>M. Rita Manzini</i>	93
Is particle <i>a</i> (unified) category? <i>Anna Roussou</i>	121
The particle <i>how</i> <i>Elly van Gelderen</i>	159
The cartography of <i>yes</i> and <i>no</i> in West Flemish <i>Liliane Haegeman &amp; Andrew Weir</i>	175
On polarity particles in Italian varieties <i>Jacopo Garzonio &amp; Cecilia Poletto</i>	211
Discourse and the syntax of the left periphery: Clitic Left Dislocation and Hanging Topic <i>Alessandra Giorgi</i>	229
Index	251

DOI 10.1075/la.226

Cataloging-in-Publication Data available from Library of Congress:

LCCN 2015032882 (PRINT) / 2015034819 (E-BOOK)

ISBN 978 90 272 5709 3 (HB)

ISBN 978 90 272 6772 6 (E-BOOK)

2015 – John Benjamins B.V.

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# Issues in discourse-oriented syntax\*

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## 1. Issues at the syntax-discourse interface

Many theoretical linguists distinguish between two domains of interpretation that are expressed by the grammar of natural languages: the broad component of argumental and event-related semantics and a variety of phenomena that can be subsumed under the notion of scope-discourse semantics. Traditionally, this duality of the conceptual-intentional interface is reflected by separated lexical domains (the functional and the substantive/contentive lexicon). The general approach of encoding discourse meaning in syntactic structure goes at least back to Chomsky (1970) and Jackendoff (1972), who pointed out the relevance of notions like focus and presupposition for syntactic computation. Using the term 'focus of a sentence' to denote newly-supplied information and the term 'presupposition' for the remaining part of the sentence, Jackendoff introduced "a syntactic marker F which can be associated with any node in the surface structure" (Jackendoff 1972:240). Accordingly, in cases such as (1), the syntactic surface representation can be notated as follows:

(1) PAT went to the party.

(2) [S ( (NP) PAT [VP went [PP to [NP the party]]]]]

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\* The present volume originated in two interrelated workshops: *The role of modal particles in diverse speech acts* (October 2013, Venice) and *Discourse particles: Cross-linguistic perspectives* (January 2014, Konstanz). We are grateful for financial support from both the German Research Foundation (DFG grant BA 1178/9-1) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD grant 57055195). Thanks to all the scholars who reviewed the contributions to this volume.



As shown in (2), the syntactic representation contains a formal device to trigger both the prosodic aspects of focus and the focus interpretation of the relevant constituent in the semantics of the sentence. However, as cases like (1), expressing focus through prosody alone, demonstrate best, the syntactic feature [F] is suspicious of merely providing a device to pass information from semantics to phonology. Accordingly, Jackendoff (2002: 409) concludes “that a syntactic feature [+F] is simply an artifact of syntactocentrism, the assumption that everything in meaning has to be derived from something generated in syntax.” However, while Jackendoff has replaced such ‘mediating’ devices with the postulation of a direct phonology-semantics interface within his Parallel Architecture, many approaches within generative linguistics are still committed to the general representational view that notions of information structure should be encoded in the syntactic representation and be read off from there by the interfaces. More specifically, while many approaches within formal linguistics adopted the early account of encoding discourse notions in terms of diacritics which are assigned to the output, i.e. to the surface representation at the end of the syntactic derivation (Büring 2013; Zubizarreta 1998), a prominent branch of theoretical linguistics considers discourse-semantic relations to be encoded in the syntax as formal categories actively determining the syntactic derivation. This account aims at maximizing the representation of systematic interpretive aspects in terms of syntactic structures, or, to put it more metaphorically, it attempts to draw maps of syntactic configurations as detailed as possible – thus the name ‘cartographic approach’, cf. Rizzi (1997) for seminal work and Rizzi (2014) for a recent overview. One important step towards the cartographic approach was the extension of X-bar theory to so-called ‘non-lexical elements’ of the clause, an idea that was first suggested by Chomsky (1986). Given this extension, the assignment of discourse meaning can be performed on the same structural basis as the assignment of argumental and eventive properties. Crucially, the elements of the functional lexicon associated with the domain of discourse meaning trigger both the interpretation on the meaning side and the interpretation of marked intonational contours (in cases of prosodically marked focus, for instance). Since the meaning addressed by these mechanisms operates at the level of the whole utterance (the CP level), it has been suggested that the most natural model for these approaches is a strict syntactocentric one where the interpretation at the interfaces takes place only once (i.e. when the whole structure is assembled); cf. Horvath (2007); Winkler (2005) on the relation between architectural axioms and the syntactic representation of pragmatic meaning components.

It can be argued that both the model of grammar and the representational axioms of this approach to discourse meaning components are inconsistent with the more recent goal of minimizing representations in the syntactic component in

minimalist theory (e.g. Newmeyer 2009; Trotzke & Zwart 2014). Proponents of the cartographic approach postulate functional heads in the left periphery possessing designated features for focus, topic, and other information-structural constructs. According to Chomsky’s (1995: 228) economy conditions, however, “any structure formed by the computation [...] is constituted of elements already present in the lexical items selected [...]; no new objects are added in the course of computation apart from rearrangements of lexical properties.” In other words, this ‘Inclusiveness Condition’ implies that syntactic operations can refer only to lexical features. This condition is inspired by a core property of cognitive modules: informational encapsulation. As Scheer (2011) points out in this context, “modules produce an output on the grounds of a domain specific input, and there can be no communication with anything beyond the module (i.e. possible sources of additional information) during the computation;” cf. also, in this regard, the ‘Strong Modularity Hypothesis for Discourse Features’ by Horvath (2010). The conceptual problem is that lexical items cannot be viewed as encoding information-structural properties. Consequently, such properties, as Neeleman & Szendrői (2004: 155) note, “must be inserted after an element has been taken from the lexicon,” and thus the postulation of discourse-oriented features and the functional heads hosting them violates the Inclusiveness Condition. On the other hand, possible theoretical alternatives that involve more opaque interfaces must postulate more complex computations in postsyntactic interpretive components (for discussion, cf. Aboh 2010; Trotzke 2015).

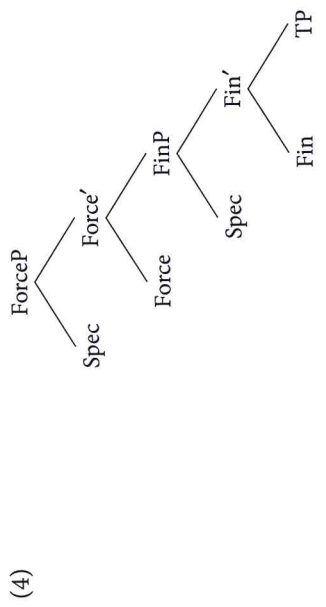
Notwithstanding these conceptual issues, the *descriptive* advantages of the cartographic framework have never been doubted. Approaching syntactic structures (and especially the clausal left periphery) from a cartographic perspective has proven to be incredibly fruitful. Since proponents of this approach are committed, by and large, to a rigorous methodology of description, they can rely on a large amount of previous work and thereby also refine our picture of the overall syntactic structure of heretofore under-researched languages. The two goals, descriptive adequacy and the explanatory level of adequacy addressed by the Minimalist Program, of course often complement each other. Rizzi (2013: 213) points out that “an accurate map of the sequence [of functional projections] is the essential point of departure for further study, including the search for further explanation” (cf. also Ramchand & Svenonius 2014 in this regard). In particular, a crucial point of connection between the cartographic approach and the Minimalist Program is the core idea of computational simplicity. The cartographic approach contributes to this goal by decomposing functional projections into simple structural units. Thus, regarding computational complexity, “[l]ocal simplicity is preserved by natural languages at the price of accepting a higher global complexity, through the proliferation of structural units” (Rizzi 2004: 8).



Until recently, little attention has been paid within the cartographic enterprise to components of discourse meaning that go beyond information structure and fall into the domain of non-at-issue meaning (Potts 2005, 2012) operating at the level of illocutionary force. Turning to this meaning component, Rizzi (1997) suggests that a single head within this domain (viz. C) is not enough to account for the leftmost periphery of the clause, given the different interpretive imports hosted in this zone. The first interpretive import Rizzi discusses is the widely-assumed aspect that “C is basically an indicator of mood or force [...] declarative, interrogative, and so on” (Chomsky 1995:240) and thus determines clause types. To make this ‘specification of force’ more concrete, consider the following examples, in which the choice of the complementizer *whether* results in an interrogative and the choice of *that* in a declarative:

- (3) a. (I wonder) whether Hans drank beer.
- b. (I know) that Hans drank beer.

In addition to this ‘specification of force’, the second kind of informational contribution of the C-domain concerns the fact that a complementizer is connected to certain properties of the verbal system. For example, since “COMP may be realized as *that* before tensed sentences and as *for* before infinitives” (Chomsky & Lasnik 1977:434), the choice of the complementizer co-occurs (in English) with the choice of a tensed or an infinitival verb with *to*. Yet, based on Italian data, Rizzi (1997:283) argues that “the ‘temporal’ properties encoded by C are very rudimentary”, for a complementizer can co-occur with different tenses. Therefore, he claims that “C expresses a distinction related to tense but more rudimentary than tense and other inflectional specifications on the verbal system: finiteness” (Rizzi 1997:284). When we adopt this assumption that the C-system merely expresses an abstract specification of ‘finiteness’ (Fin) and put this together with the property of specifying the ‘force’ of a sentence, the structural representation of CP, as a first approximation, can be dissolved into a force-finiteness system, as illustrated in the following schema:



Note that the Force domain of the clause distinguishes the CP layer from all other (potentially) phasal domains of the derivation. Although we recognize parallels both between the CP and the DP domain (e.g. Giusti 2006) and between the CP and the vP layer (e.g. Belletti 2004), the Force domain is unique to the CP phase. The present volume focuses on this particular functional domain of the clause.

To approach the illocutionary layer of the clause, many of the contributions of this volume deal with the syntactic behavior of discourse particles. Discourse particles are geared to certain clause types (declarative, polar interrogative, *wh*-interrogative, exclamative, imperative, etc.) and arise mainly in root clauses, the designated domain of utterance rather than propositional structure. They make a semantic contribution by co-determining the illocutionary force of an utterance. Historically, discourse particles derive from different sources such as adverbs, adjectives, verbs and even complementizers or certain pronouns as has been argued. However, all elements referred to as discourse particles have undergone a process of grammaticalization in which they, roughly speaking, lost lexical and gained grammatical meaning (cf. contributions in this volume by M. Rita Manzini, Anna Roussou, and Elly van Gelderen). More specifically, according to a formal syntactic perspective (Roberts & Roussou 2003), the lexical elements are reanalyzed as elements bearing functional-head status. Given what we sketched above about the articulated functional structures proposed in the cartographic program, in which a variety of phenomena related to discourse functions are coded as functional heads, it is but a small step to postulate that discourse particles are instantiated as functional heads in the clause. This grammaticalization of discourse functions – ‘pragmaticalization’, in Diewald’s (2011) terms – can thus shed light on the representation of illocutionary meaning in the grammar in general (cf. Munaro & Poletto 2003). Recent contributions along these lines include Coniglio & Zegrean (2012) who propose to split ForceP into distinct projections for clause type and illocution proper that can account for the syntactic behavior of discourse particles. In the present volume, the papers by Josef Bayer & Andreas Trotzke, Roland Hinterhölzl & Nicola Munaro, and Anna Cardinaletti provide similar accounts.

The issue of how to account for the syntax of discourse particles within a more explicit map of the illocutionary domain of the clause is a good starting point for considering further phenomena related to a syntactic representation of speech acts in the tradition of Ross (1970), a perspective recently revived by Hill (2007). While approaches such as Hill’s place a premium on the performative aspect of the speech act when characterizing the relevant projections, other accounts capitalize on the speaker’s attitude/modal relation to the utterance (Speas & Tenny 2003). The contributions by Liliane Haegeman & Andrew Weir,



Jacopo Garzonio & Cecilia Poletto, and Alessandra Giorgi consider phenomena not related to discourse particles and, based on their data, discuss further functional domains within or even above ForceP as the interface between the clause and the discourse context.

By focusing on speech-act related particles and/or meaning domains outside of information structure, this volume makes a distinctly new contribution to the field, as existing collections on this issue either do not offer a comparatively narrow focus on particles (Aelbrecht, Haegeman & Nye 2012; Beninca & Munaro 2011) or are not limited to syntax-oriented approaches (Abraham & Leiss 2012; Leiss & Abraham 2014). Although collections within non-formal frameworks exist (e.g. Degand, Cornillie & Pietrandrea 2013), we do not consider these works as competing with the present volume. The primary audience of this volume are researchers and graduate students interested in state-of-art approaches to the syntax-discourse interface within the cartographic approach to syntax.

## 2. The contributions

The first contribution by Josef Bayer & Andreas Trotzke deals with “The derivation and interpretation of left peripheral discourse particles.” In particular, Bayer & Trotzke focus on exceptional cases of co-constituency of discourse particles and *wh*-elements in the left periphery of German *wh*-questions. Returning to a first attempt in Bayer & Obenauer (2011), they propose a successive-cyclic movement account for the distribution of German discourse particles in the left periphery, and, relying on the combination of key aspects of the Minimalist Program, they develop a derivational model that can also account for the seemingly problematic cases of stacked particles appearing in the left periphery. After having sketched their derivational model, they turn to the interpretation of configurations involving left peripheral discourse particles. In comparison with the unmarked construction in which the particle stays in its middle field base position, Bayer & Trotzke notice an interpretive distinctness that, as they argue, requires the notion of emphasis for intensity to account for the extra pragmatic effect that these left peripheral structures convey.

Roland Hinterhölzl & Nicola Munaro also deal with syntactic and pragmatic properties of discourse particles in non-assertive speech acts. In their contribution “On the interpretation of modal particles in non-assertive speech acts in German and Bellunese,” they first provide a descriptive overview of discourse particles in Bellunese and their German correspondents. After their comparative overview, Hinterhölzl & Munaro point out that discourse particles in non-assertive speech acts function as evidential markers interacting with exclamative intonation for

the purpose of deriving the expressive meanings in exclamations and special questions. Given their analysis of particles as evidential markers, they provide a syntactic representation of the role of discourse particles in standard and special questions. More specifically, the authors propose that evidential particles are interpreted as propositional anaphors; they argue that their scopal properties require the syntactic representation of the speech act component of an utterance. In their cartographic account, a projection ‘Speaker evidence (EvidS)’; hosting specific particles, dominates the projection ‘Hearer Evidence (EvidH)’; hosting, e.g. the German adverb/particle *nun* (lit. ‘now’).

Focusing more closely on Italian particles, in her contribution “Italian verb-based discourse particles in a comparative perspective,” Anna Cardinaletti provides further support for her analysis in earlier work in which she argued that both Italian and German sentence-internal particles are deficient XPs (adverbs) occurring in the specifier of dedicated functional projections. She gives a syntactic analysis of Italian verb-based discourse particles and provides evidence that sentence-initial and sentence-final discourse particles in Italian are not derivationally related but are rather merged in different layers of the clause. Based on this analysis, Cardinaletti demonstrates convergence between Italian and West Flemish verb-based particles (called ‘direct address particles’). In particular, she shows that sentence-initial address particles interact in interesting ways with vocatives; in doing so, she proposes that discourse particles and vocatives occur in Speech Act Projections higher than ForceP.

In contrast to both Cardinaletti and Hinterhölzl & Munaro, M. Rita Manzini claims that in Italian and its dialects, there is no evidence that lexical items functioning as discourse particles correspond to specialized functional heads or to deficient XPs, as proposed by Cardinaletti. In her contribution “Italian adverbs and discourse particles: between recategorization and ambiguity,” Manzini demonstrates that Italian discourse particles have the syntactic distribution of adverbs, and that as a consequence ‘discourse particle’ is merely the name of a special interpretation of adverbs. In contrast to cartographic approaches that establish a fully transparent relation between syntactic position and semantic interpretation, Manzini proposes that the interpretive ambiguity of these adverbs can be captured by a scoping mechanism at the semantics interface that accounts for the ambiguity resolution. Temporal, aspectual as well as manner modifiers take events as their argument while discourse particles take the entire illocution as their argument, relating it to the Common Ground of propositional contents shared by speaker and hearer. Thus, Manzini presents an approach that identifies the interpretive component as the relevant level for differentiating adverbs from particles, in contrast to other contributions of this volume.



In a similar vein, Anna Roussou points out that discourse particles in Greek belong to the repertoire of grammatical categories independently attested. Her contribution “Is particle a (unified) category?” shows that Greek discourse particles are not adverbial as in languages such as German and Italian. Rather, these particles interact with the verbal form, giving rise to a number of periphrastic constructions and, therefore, should be considered grammatical markers. Roussou first shows that the Greek particles fall into two basic categories (verbal and nominal), and then she asks whether all these elements realize the same syntactic features. Based on the assumption that the term ‘particle’ does not refer to a syntactic category, Roussou identifies the syntactic category each of these elements belong to. Thereby, she shows that the elements under investigation, and usually lumped together under the cover term ‘particle’, have quite distinct formal properties.

The three contributions which follow deal with particles that are generally not subsumed under the label ‘discourse particle’, but are nevertheless connected to discourse meaning at the level of illocutionary force. The first paper by Elly van Gelderen examines how the manner and degree adverb *how* also functions as a complementizer and as a marker of polar questions (*yes/no* marker). In her contribution “The particle *how*”, she points out the expanding use of *how* as a complementizer and *yes/no* marker. Van Gelderen examines the diachronic shift of *how* from manner and degree adverb to complementizer, and does the same for the development toward a *yes/no* marker. After focusing on the internal structure of *how* as a modifier, she turns to the question of how to account for the observed changes. In particular, starting from the observation that *how* originates as an instrumental form of the Indo-European *wh*-pronoun \**kwo*, van Gelderen models the changes from manner adverb to complementizer and to interrogative marker using the framework of minimalist syntax.

Liliane Haegeman & Andrew Weir deal with the person and number marking on the response particles *ja* (‘yes’) and *nee* (‘no’) in the West Flemish dialect of Lapscheure. They first demonstrate that these agreeing particles only occur in root contexts. Then, they investigate the nature of the agreement marking on the response particles in more detail. In particular, Haegeman & Weir focus on the shape of the agreement on the response particles in order to determine if they correspond to any other manifestation of subjects in this dialect. They conclude that a specialized (‘sui generis’) agreement form is associated with the response particles. Based on this insight, they provide an analysis of *ja/nee* according to which the articles themselves are in fact TP pro-forms which are integrated in a full clausal structure that is projected in line with the cartographic approach. They propose that these pro-forms are anaphoric to an antecedent proposition.

Also dealing with response particles, Jacopo Garzonio & Cecilia Poletto present a paper “On polarity particles in Italian varieties” and, in this context, discuss the syntactic encoding of emphasis found in Italian constructions that depend on the Hanging Topic (HT) position, a position which is only available in root contexts. They first investigate different types of emphatic structures that share syntactic encoding of emphasis by repetition of a context in a very high position dominating the whole clause (the position of HTs). Given their analysis of emphatic structures, they demonstrate that there exist reinforced polarity particles occurring sentence-finally in Southern Italian dialects that can never occur in embedded contexts. The existence of reinforced particles thereby confirms their general view on the limitation of emphatic structures to the root domain.

The last contribution of this volume also deals with the position of Hanging Topics. In her paper “Discourse and the syntax of the left periphery: Clitic Left Dislocation and Hanging Topic,” Alessandra Giorgi reconsiders the properties of Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD) and HT in Italian. She points out that the C-layer is a hybrid layer, hosting both moved constituents, as in derivations involving contrastive focus, and base-generated elements, as in the case of CLLD and HT. Giorgi argues that the unmoved status of HT and CLLD follows from their peculiar syntax. According to her, CLLD and HT are embedded in phrases projected by ‘prosody-oriented’ heads. Prosody-oriented heads are not related to lexical but to phonological content. Crucially, they are not part of the C-layer at all. In her paper, Giorgi provides a detailed cartographic account of the interaction between these phrases, generated inside prosody-oriented projections, and the rest of the clause.

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