Italian verb-based discourse particles in a comparative perspective*

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This paper provides a syntactic analysis of Italian verb-based discourse particles. In spite of their utterance-peripheral distribution and their pragmatic content, they should be considered as integrated in the sentence with which they are associated. It is argued that sentence-initial and sentence-final particles are not derivationally related but are merged in different layers of the clause (CP and IP, respectively). Following Haegeman & Hill (2013) and (2014), it is proposed that sentence-initial particles occur in Speech Act projections above Rizzi’s (1997) ForceP. The interaction of particles and vocatives is also discussed. In a comparative perspective, some differences between Italian and West Flemish have been correlated with the different distribution of discourse particles, namely as specifiers and heads, respectively.

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the syntactic analysis of Italian verb-based discourse particles. In spite of their utterance-peripheral distribution and their pragmatic content, they should be considered as integrated in the sentence with which they are associated. More specifically, it is proposed that Rizzi’s (1997) ForceP is not the highest projection in the clause but is preceded by projections hosting discourse particles. The discussion will show interesting similarities between Italian and West Flemish verb-based particles, called ‘direct address particles’ in Haegeman & Hill (2013) and (2014).

The paper also provides both syntactic and semantic evidence that Italian sentence-initial and sentence-final discourse particles are not derivationally related but are merged in different layers of the clause (CP and IP, respectively), thus contributing to the meaning of the utterance in different ways.

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The discussion provides further support for the analysis of particles argued for in Cardinaletti (2011), in which I showed that:

1. Italian sentence-internal particles, like German ones, are deficient XPs occurring in the specifier of dedicated functional projections in the highest portion of the IP layer, the Mood/Mod field of Coniglio (2005) and following works (see also Cardinaletti 2007; Grosz 2005, 2007).
2. Italian sentence-final particles are merged in the IP layer like sentence-internal particles, and what follows them is moved to a higher specifier position via roll-up movement in the antisymmetric approach proposed by Kayne (1994).
3. Italian sentence-initial particles, which are verb-based, are merged with projections of the CP layer.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, the basic properties of verb-based particles are presented. In Sections 3 and 4, I summarise the evidence for the three proposals made in Cardinaletti (2011) and listed in 1.-3. above and provide further evidence for these hypotheses. In Section 5, I show that sentence-initial address particles interact in interesting ways with vocatives, as discussed in Haegeman & Hill (2013) and (2014) for West Flemish (WF henceforth) and Romanian. Assuming a comparative perspective, in Section 6, I extend to Italian Haegeman & Hill’s (2013) and (2014) proposal that vocatives occur in Speech Act Projections higher than ForceP. The different pragmatic roles of vocatives can thus be derived syntactically, namely by their merger in two distinct Speech Act layers. Some differences between Italian and West Flemish will emerge, which correlate with the different status of discourse particles in the two languages.

2. On verb-based particles

This section discusses the basic properties of verb-based discourse particles like Italian guarda, senti, and sai, based on the verbs guardare ‘to look’, sentire ‘to hear’, and sapere ‘to know’, respectively. Similarly to adverb-based modal particles (1), these particles do not contribute to the truth-conditional meaning of the sentence, but express the speaker’s relation to the speech event and the addressee. In (2a), for instance, guarda expresses the speaker’s firm belief; the meaning of the utterance is something like ‘I am convinced that you deserve it’. In (2b), sai expresses the speaker’s authority: ‘You should know that you are not right’.\(^1\)

1. As the example (2b) shows, discourse particles are compatible with a modal particle like mica (for its pragmatic import and its syntactic status, cf. Cinque 1991 and Coniglio 2008: 118–120).
(1)  E’ venuto, poi?
    he.is  come  poi
    ‘Did he come? (I’m wondering)’

(2)  a.  No, te lo meriti, guarda.
    ‘You deserve it, look (I’m convinced)’
b.  Non hai mica ragione, sai.
    ‘You are not right, you know’

The distribution of verb-based particles is constrained.

On the one hand, like adverb-based particles (3), verb-based particles are sensitive to clause types (4). Both *guarda* and *sai* are grammatical in declarative sentences (4a). All three particles are ungrammatical in questions (4b). Imperative sentences discriminate between them: *guarda* is impossible, while *senti* and *sai* are possible (4c):

(3)  a.  Cosa significheranno mai quelle parole? (Coniglio 2008: 108)
    ‘What do those words mean?’
b.  Lascialo pure sul tavolo! (Coniglio 2008: 116)
    ‘Leave it on the table!’

    ‘You are not nice, look / *listen / you know’
b.  Sei pronto, *guarda / *senti / *sai?
    ‘Are you ready, *look / *listen / *you know?’
c.  Fa quello che ti dico, *guarda / senti / sai!
    ‘Do what I tell you, *look / listen / you know!’

Exhortative *dai* ‘c’m on’, based on the verb *dare* ‘to give’, is only compatible with imperative/ exclamative sentences:

    ‘You are not nice, c’m on’
b.  Sei pronto, *dai?
    ‘Are you ready, c’m on?’
c.  Andiamo, dai!
    ‘Let’s go, c’m on!’

Whatever analysis is adopted to account for the sensitivity to clause typing of adverb-based particles, it can be extended to verb-based particles. Consider the mechanism proposed by Bayer (2008) and developed by Coniglio (2008), (2011), (2014), according to which adverb-based modal particles enter an Agree relation with the clause type features encoded in Force. A similar proposal can be adopted for verb-based particles.
On the other hand, verb-based particles display verbal morphology signaling agreement with the addressee. As shown in (6), they can appear in the 2nd person singular and plural, and in the 3rd person singular, which is the addressee honorific in Italian (in this function, the 3rd person plural is obsolete, and the 2nd person plural is generally used instead):

(6)  a.  (Tu) non ti sei mica comportato bene, sai.  
    ‘You did not behave well at all, you know’  
    2sg

b.  (Voi) non vi siete mica comportati bene, sapete.  
    ‘You did not behave well at all, you know’  
    2pl

c.  (Lei) non si è mica comportato bene, sa.  
    ‘You did not behave well at all, you know’  
    3sg

In (6), the finite verb and the verb-based particle agree in person and number features. They may however differ in features. When the subject is for instance 3rd person, as in (7), the particle still agrees with the addressee:

(7)  a.  Maria non si è mica comportata bene, sai.  
    ‘Maria did not behave well at all, you know’  
    2sg

b.  Maria non si è mica comportata bene, sapete.  
    ‘Maria did not behave well at all, you know’  
    2pl

c.  Maria non si è mica comportata bene, sa.  
    ‘Maria did not behave well at all, you know’  
    3sg

These data suggest that the particle enter an Agree relation with the Speech Act head(s) encoding the discourse coordinates, suggested in many works since Speas & Tenny (2003) (cf. Sigurðsson 2004, 2011; Giorgi 2010; Haegeman & Hill 2013, 2014), and in particular with the head encoding the addressee feature (see Section 5.2 below for an implementation of this hypothesis).

Sensitivity to clause types and agreement morphology suggest that verb-based particles are somehow integrated in the clause with which they are associated and do not represent independent speech acts. What follows discusses their distribution in more detail.

### 3. Italian sentence-final particles occur in the IP layer

This section reviews the evidence, discussed in Cardinaletti (2011), which suggests that Italian sentence-final particles occur in the IP layer like sentence-internal particles. The observations hold for both adverb- and verb-based particles.

In Cardinaletti (2011), I also provided evidence that Italian adverb-based particles are not heads of the clausal skeleton, but (weak) phrases which occur
in specifier positions, on a par with German modal particles (Cardinaletti 2007; Coniglio 2005, 2006; Grosz 2005, 2007). I assume that verb-based particles have the same property. They project weak phrases which occur in specifier positions.

3.1 Adverb-based particles

First, consider the fact that sentence-final particles like *poi* in (8a) can be followed by right-dislocated elements (8b). This word order can be understood by suggesting that particles are (externally) merged in a Middle-field position which is lower than the left-peripheral FamiliarTopic projection that hosts the right-dislocated item *la casa*, but higher than the core proposition called ZP in (8c). The roll-up derivation of Right Dislocation assumed in this paper (Cardinaletti 2002) is shown in (9). Movement of ZP across the particle obtains the final position of the particle in (8a); further merge of the right dislocated element and further movement of the clause across it provides the order in (8b):

(8) a. L’ha comprata, poi?  
   ‘Did he buy it? (I’m wondering)’

   b. L’ha comprata, poi, la casa?  
   ‘Did he buy the house? (I’m wondering)’

   c. **Merge order**: *la casa* > *poi* > ZP

(9) a. \[\text{YP poi Y [ZP \text{l’ha comprata}]\]

   b. \[\text{XP [ZP \text{l’ha comprata}] X [YP poi Y [ZP \text{ha comprata}]\]

   c. \[\text{FamTopicP [DP \text{la casa}] FamTopic [XP [ZP \text{l’ha comprata}] X [YP poi Y [ZP \text{ha comprata}]\]

   d. \[\text{TopicP [XP \text{l’ha comprata, poi}] Topic [FamTopicP [DP la casa] FamTopic [XP [ZP \text{ha comprata}] X [YP poi Y [ZP \text{ha comprata}]\]

The analysis is further strengthened by the observation that the intonation associated with sentence-final particles is similar to that of right-dislocated constituents (Cardinaletti 2011: 520).

Second, consider the fact that sentence-final modal particles can be followed by sentential adverbs like *forse* ‘perhaps’, which are IP elements (Cinque 1999), as in (10a). This shows that they are merged lower than sentential adverbs, (10b), and is further evidence that they occur inside the IP layer. The derivation of (10a) is similar to (8b):

(10) a. L’avrà comprata, poi, forse, la casa?  
   ‘Did he perhaps buy the house? (I’m wondering)’

   b. **Merge order**: *la casa* > *forse* > *poi* > ZP
3.2 Verb-based particles

As we did above, the distribution of verb-based particles can be established by checking their interaction with other constituents of the clause. First, consider (11a,b), where verb-based particles are followed by right-dislocated constituents (see (8b) above). We take this to mean that they are merged with a constituent which is lower than the FamiliarTopic projection hosting *questo premio*, as shown in (11c):

\[(11)\]
\[
a. \text{No, te lo meriti, guarda, *questo premio*.}  
   \text{‘You deserve this prize (I’m convinced)’}  
b. \text{Non te lo meriti, sai, *questo premio*.}  
   \text{‘You do not deserve this prize, you know’}  
c. \text{\textbf{Merge order:} *questo premio > guarda > ZP}  
   \text{\textbf{*questo premio > sai > ZP}}
\]

Note that the merge order in (11c) gives rise to a grammatical sentence even when ZP movement across the particle does not take place:

\[(12)\]
\[
a. \text{No, *questo premio, guarda, te lo meriti proprio*.}  
   \text{‘This prize, you deserve it (I’m convinced)’}  
b. \text{*Questo premio, sai, non te lo meriti*.}  
   \text{‘This prize, you know, you do not deserve it’}
\]

The interaction with sentential adverbs confirms that sentence-final particles are merged IP-internally (see (10) above):

\[(13)\]
\[
a. \text{L’avrà comprata, sai, forse, la casa.}  
   \text{‘He perhaps bought the house, you know’}  
   \text{*L’avrà comprata, forse, sai, la casa.}  
b. \text{\textbf{Merge order:} \textit{la casa > forse > sai > ZP}}
\]

Like other particles, verb-based particles can co-occur in one and the same sentence and show ordering restrictions. They can only co-occur in the superficial order \textit{guarda > sai} (14a). Given the roll-up movement we are assuming here, the merge order must be as in (14b):

\[(14)\]
\[
a. \text{Non ti sei mica comportato bene, guarda, sai / *sai, guarda!}  
   \text{‘You did not behave well at all, you know!’}  
b. \text{\textbf{Merge order:} sai > guarda}
\]

The data discussed in this section confirm that sentence-final particles are integrated in the clause in which they occur. In what follows, the analysis is extended to discourse particles occurring in sentence-initial position.
4. Sentence-initial particles

Verb-based particles can also occur sentence-initially:

(15) a. No, guarda, te lo meriti.
     ‘No, look, you deserve it’

     b. Sai, non hai mica ragione.
     ‘You know, you are not right at all’

We focus here on the cases in which there is no intonational break/change between the particle and the following clause. When a pause follows the particle and/or a different intonation (e.g. rising) occurs on the particle, the particle can be taken to be an independent speech act. In the cases discussed below, in which no such intonational break and/or change is found, we take the particle to be integrated in the sentence.²

The co-occurrence of sentence-initial particles with a left-peripheral item like questo premio in (16a) and su questa questione in (16b) shows that the particle occurs to the left of the Topic phrase of Rizzi (1997):

(16) a. No, guarda, questo premio, te lo meriti proprio.
     ‘No, look, this prize, you deserve it’

     b. Sai, su questa questione, non hai mica ragione.
     ‘You know, on this matter, you are not right at all’

There are two possible analyses of (15):

1. The movement of the ZP constituent across the particle is optional (when it takes place, the particle is final, as in (2); when it does not, the particle is initial, as in (15) and (16)), or

2. Sentence-initial and sentence-final particles are two (homophonous) different elements, merged in different layers of the sentence (CP and IP, respectively).

Both semantic and syntactic evidence point to the correctness of the hypothesis in (2.).

4.1 Semantic contribution

The first observation regards the semantic contribution of the particles when occurring in the two positions. While guarda in (17a) reinforces the utterance,

². As far as I know, no analysis of the intonation associated with sentence-initial verb-based particles is available yet.
underlining the speaker’s firm belief, guarda in (17b) attracts the attention of the addressee establishing a common ground (Bazzanella 2001):³

(17)  a. No, te lo meriti, guarda.
    ‘No, you deserve it (I’m convinced)’
   b. [dando un’indicazione stradale ad un amico]
    Guarda, non puoi sbagliare.
    [giving directions to a friend] ‘Look, you cannot get wrong’

It is highly improbable that the pragmatic contribution of the particle may vary depending on the distribution of the constituent it attracts when it appears clause-finally.

A relevant contrast is provided in (18). As pointed out by a reviewer, particles may occur in all-new sentences, as background to the real answer of a question, which has to follow. As shown in (18), these contexts only allow sentence-initial guarda:

(18)  A: Cos’è successo?
    ‘What happened?’
  B: a. Guarda, non ci crederai. Maria ha chiamato e ci ha invitato al workshop.
    ‘Look, you won’t believe it. Maria called and invited us to the workshop’
   b. *Non ci crederai, guarda. Maria ha chiamato e ci ha invitato al workshop.

If the particle were one and the same in the two utterance-peripheral positions, no such contrast would be expected.

³. A difference in the semantic contribution of the particle is also found with verb-based particles in Italian dialects. As observed by Marco Coniglio (p.c.), in his dialectal variety (Venice Marghera), sentence-initial and sentence-final ciò do not have one and the same meaning:

(i)  a. Ciò, cosa i vol?
    ciò what they want
    ‘Well, what do they want?’
   b. Cossa i vol, ciò?
    what they want ciò
    ‘What do they want? (They shouldn’t require anything…)’

The same conclusion can be drawn on the basis of Penello & Chinellato’s (2008) description of another Veneto dialect. As proposed in Cardinaletti (2011), sentence-final ciò does not derive from sentence-initial ciò by syntactic derivation (pace Penello & Chinellato 2008), but the two ciòs merge with different layers of the sentence, IP and CP, respectively.
4.2 Clause types

Sentence-initial particles are constrained by clause types differently from sentence-final particles. Although initial *sai* is restricted to the same clause types as final *sai* (see (4)), initial *guarda* and *senti* are compatible with declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences (compare (20) with (4)):

(19) a. *Sai, non hai mica ragione.*
   ‘You know, you are not right’

b. *Sai, sei pronto?*
   ‘You know, are you ready?’

c. *Sai, fa quello che ti dico!*
   ‘You know, do what I tell you!’

(20) a. *Guarda / Senti, non puoi sbagliare.*
   ‘Look / Listen, you cannot get wrong’

b. *Guarda / Senti, sei pronto?*
   ‘Look / Listen, are you ready?’

c. *Guarda / Senti, fa quello che ti dico!*
   ‘Look / Listen, do what I tell you!’

Exhortative sentence-initial *dai* is also compatible with a declarative sentence:

(21) *Dai, non ti credo.*
   ‘C’mon, I do not believe you’

It is highly improbable that sensitivity to clause types may vary depending on the position of the constituent with which the particle combines. The different distribution instead points to the conclusion that sentence-initial and sentence-final particles are different items.

Further evidence in this direction comes from the co-occurrence of verb-based particles with the declarative complementizer *che* ‘that’, which is only possible in sentence-initial position (cf. Haegeman & Hill 2013 for a similar restriction with Romanian *hai*):

(22) a. *Senti (che) ti dico una cosa.*
   ‘Listen (that) I tell you something’

b. (*Che) ti dico una cosa, senti.

(23) *Dai che non ti credo.* (cf. (21))
   ‘C’mon, I do not believe you’
4.3 Agreement patterns

As we saw in (6) above, verb-based particles agree with the addressee. This is also true of sentence-initial particles, as shown in (24):

(24) a. Sai, non ti sei mica comportato bene!  
   ‘You know, you did not behave well at all!’
   
b. Sapete, non vi siete mica comportati bene!  
   ‘You did not behave well at all, you know!’
   
c. Sa, non si è mica comportato bene!  
   ‘You know, you did not behave well at all’

In the Central Italian variety spoken in the province of Ancona, the non-agreeing form sa is also possible. Note that it is ungrammatical in initial position and can only occur in sentence-final position:

(25) a. *Sa, non ti sei mica comportato bene!  
   ‘You know, you did not behave well at all!’
   
b. Non ti sei mica comportato bene, sa.  
   ‘You did not behave well at all, you know!’

(26) a. *Sa, non vi siete mica comportati bene!  
   ‘You know, you did not behave well at all!’
   
b. Non vi siete mica comportati bene, sa.  
   ‘You did not behave well at all, you know!’

It is highly improbable that agreement with the addressee may vary depending on the position of the constituent with which the particle combines. The different agreement possibilities instead point to the conclusion that sentence-initial and sentence-final particles are indeed different items. The restriction shown in (25) and (26) can be understood as follows: the IP-internal non-agreeing sa is a grammaticalized particle which cannot occur in the CP layer. The sentence-initial discourse particle based on sapere ‘to know’ always agrees with the addressee, as in (24).

With guarda, a slightly different pattern is observed: Number agreement with the addressee is only found in initial position:

(27) a. Guarda / Guardate, non potete sbagliare.  
   ‘Look, you cannot get wrong’

4. The non-agreeing form guarda is however incompatible with the polite 3sg form, which always requires the agreeing polite form guardi:

(i) Guardi, non puo sbagliare.  
   ‘Look, you cannot get wrong’

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b. No, ve lo meritate, guarda / *guardate.
   ‘No, you deserve it (I’m convinced)’

Again, the different agreement possibilities suggest that the particles are different items in the two clausal positions. The pattern in (27) suggests that the IP-internal particle *guarda is a grammaticalized form which shows no agreement (like *sa in Central Italian (25b) and (26b)). The sentence-initial discourse particle based on guardare may agree with the addressee, but this is not obligatory, as shown in (27a).

4.4 Ordering restrictions

Ordering restrictions among particles co-occurring in one and the same sentence are also observed in sentence-initial position:

(28)  
   a. Guarda, sai / *Sai, guarda, non ti sei mica comportato bene. 2sg
   b. Guarda, sapete / *Sapete, guarda, non vi siete mica comportati bene. 2pl
   c. Guardate, sapete / *Sapete, guardate, non vi siete mica comportati bene. 2pl
    ‘Look, you know, you did not behave well at all!’

If sentence-final particles were derived from sentence-initial particles by roll-up movement, in final position we would expect to find the mirror image of what we see in (28), namely the order sai guarda, contrary to fact (see (14) above):

(29)  
   a. Non ti sei mica comportato bene, guarda, sai/*sai, guarda!
      ‘You did not behave well at all, you know!’
   b. **Merge order: sai > guarda

Note however that when the particle based on guardare occurs as a reinforcer of an imperative sentence, only the agreeing form is possible:

(i)  
   a. Guarda, fa quello che ti dico! 2sg (= (20c))
   b. Guardate, fate quello che vi dico! 2pl
   c. *Guarda, fate quello che vi dico! 2pl
      ‘Look, do what I tell you!’

The difference between (i) and (27) can be made to follow from the pragmatic contribution of the particle: in (i), it is addressee-oriented, while the non-agreeing particle in (25), which establishes a common ground between the speaker and the addressee, can be taken to be more speaker-oriented. The different agreement patterns in (i) and (27) correlate with the serialization in (32).
The different merge order in the IP and CP layers (*sai* > *guarda* (14), and *guarda* > *sai* (28a), respectively) confirms that sentence-final and sentence-initial particles are indeed different items.

4.5 The discourse particle *dai*

The discourse particle *dai* ‘c’mon’, based on *dare* ‘to give’, shows no number agreement with the addressee in that it always displays the 2sg form, with either singular or plural addressees, in either sentence-initial and sentence-final position:

(30) a. Dai, vattene.  
   b. Vattene, dai.  
   c. Dai / *Date, andatevene.  
   d. Andatevene, dai / *date.  

‘Go away, c’mon’

In the combinations with *guarda*, *dai* follows the non-agreeing form and precedes the agreeing forms:

(31) a. Guarda, dai / Dai, guarda, vattene!  
   b. Guarda, dai, andatevene!  
   c. *Guardate, dai, andatevene!  
   d. Dai, guardate, andatevene!  

‘Look, c’mon, go away’

Combining the evidence in (28) and (31), the merge order in initial position is the one in (32), which correlates with an increasing lack of agreement with the addressee:

(32) *guarda* (no agreement) > *dai* (no agreement) > *guarda/guardate*  
    (agreement) > *sai/sapete* (agreement)

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6. The non-agreeing form *dai* is however incompatible with the polite 3sg form, presumably because of a register clash:

(i) a. *Dai, se ne vada.  
   b. *Se ne vada, dai.  

‘C’mon, go away’
4.6 Interim conclusions

Sentence-initial and sentence-final particles undergo different syntactic derivations: Sentence-final particles are merged with constituents of the middle field, IP-layer, like sentence-internal particles (Cardinaletti 2011). Their final position is obtained by moving the constituent that follows them to a higher specifier position by roll-up movement. Sentence-initial particles are instead merged with constituents of the CP layer, to the left of topic phrases.

In what follows, we try to establish the location of this position more carefully, focusing on the interaction of discourse particles with other utterance-peripheral elements like vocatives. We first discuss the evidence provided by Haegeman & Hill (2014) for West Flemish and then adapt their analysis to Italian, which differs from West Flemish in minimal, but interesting ways.

5. Cross-linguistic evidence

The two West Flemish particles wè and zé/zè, based on the verbs ‘to know’ and ‘to see’, respectively, behave very similarly to the Italian verb-based particles analysed so far. Although they do not display any morphological agreement with the addressee, they can be taken to be integrated in the sentence with which they combine. All West Flemish data and observations in the following sections are taken from Haegeman & Hill (2014).

5.1 The distribution

Being a V2 language, West Flemish allows us to establish the sentence-initial position of particles more carefully than Italian. As shown in (33), sentence-initial zé, which is an attention drawer approximately meaning ‘look here’, precedes the first constituent of a V2 sentence:

(33) Zé, Valère is doa!
    ‘Look, Valère is there!’

This means that particles are hosted by projections above the CP layer.

Similarly to Italian, West Flemish verb-based particles can occur both sentence-initially and sentence-finally. Haegeman & Hill (2014) suggest that the sentence-final position in (34b) is obtained by moving across the particle the constituent that follows the particle in (34a):

(34) a. Zé, Valère is doa!
    look, Valère is there

b. Valère is doa, zé!
In (34), movement is apparently optional. In the case of particles like \textit{wê}, which are possible in only final position, Haegeman & Hill (2014) suggest that movement across the particle is obligatory:\footnote{\textit{Wê} expresses “the authority of the experience” and approximately means ‘you know’.}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{\textbullet} \textit{wê}, \textit{Valère is doa.}
\item \textit{Valère is doa \textit{wê}.}
\end{enumerate}

‘Valère is there, I’m telling you’ \hfill (35)

Verb-based particles are sensitive to clause typing. As shown in (36), \textit{wê} is impossible in questions and grammatical in imperative clauses:\footnote{Haegeman & Hill (2014) only show that sentence-final particles are sensitive to clause types, while they do not provide the relevant evidence for sentence-initial particles.}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{\textbullet} \textit{Zy-j hier a \textit{wê}?}
\item \textit{Wat ee-j gie doa \textit{wê}?}
\item \textit{Men artikel is gereed \textit{wê}!}
\end{enumerate}

‘Valère is there, I’m telling you’ \hfill (36)

In the case of particles that minimally differ, like \textit{zé} and \textit{zè}, the syntactic distribution correlates with a different meaning (and in some cases with a different intonation pattern). While \textit{zé} (with rising intonation) has an attention-drawing function, final \textit{zè} (with falling intonation) has a quasi-evidential reading and/or expresses the speaker’s authority:

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{\textbullet} \textit{Zé, Valère is doa!}
\item \textit{Valère is doa \textit{zè}.}
\end{enumerate}

‘Valère is there, as you see’ \hfill (37)

When they co-occur, particles are subject to rigid ordering restrictions. Final \textit{wê} can be followed by \textit{zé} (but not by \textit{zè}) (38a), while the opposite order is ungrammatical (38b):

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{\textbullet} \textit{K’een gedoan \textit{wê zè} / \textit{wè zè}.}
\item \textit{\textbullet} \textit{K’een is gedoan \textit{zè} / \textit{zè wê}.}
\end{enumerate}

‘I have finished’ \hfill (38)
Final zè can be followed by zé, but only if it is destressed:

\[(39)\]  
\[\text{Valère is doa zè, zè.}\]
\[\text{Valère is there zè zè}\]

The co-occurrence of one initial and one final particles is also possible:

\[(40)\]  
\[\text{Zè, Valère is doa zè.}\]
\[\text{‘Look, Valère is there, as you see’}\]

5.2 The analysis

Haegeman & Hill’s (2014) proposal can be summarised as follows:

1. in order to account for the V2 facts (see (33)), particles are taken to be heads of Speech Act Projections (SAP) occurring above ForceP and selecting ForceP (i.e., the highest projection of the CP layer in Rizzi’s (1997) proposal);

2. in order to account for the fact that particles do not cluster but may occur on the two edges of the utterance, two speech act projections (SAP1 and SAP2) are distinguished, as described in (41) and schematized in (42):

\[(41)\]
\[\text{a. SAP1 (attention drawing), which hosts the particles which can be sentence-initial (né and zè);}\]
\[\text{b. SAP2 (consolidating/bonding), which hosts the particles which must be sentence-final (wè, zè, da).}\]

\[(42)\]
\[\text{[SAP1 né [SAP2 wè [CP ....]]]}\]

The derivation proceeds as in (43): in (43a), wè is merged as the head of SAP2; in (43b), the CP constituent is obligatorily moved to the specifier of wè, obtaining the order ‘CP wè’. If né is also merged, the order ‘né CP wè’ is produced (43c). If the constituent SAP2 is further moved to the specifier of né, the order ‘CP wè né’ is obtained (43d):

\[(43)\]
\[\text{a.}\]
\[\text{b.}\]
\[\text{c.}\]
\[\text{d.}\]

Comparing the West Flemish and the Italian data, two differences should be pointed out:

1. West Flemish has a possibility that Italian does not display, namely the movement of the clause across the sentence-initial particles as shown in (43b) and (43d). As we have argued at length in Section 4, in Italian, both particles precede the sentence (28). Note that the merge order of the two particles is the same in the two languages.
2. Italian in turn displays a possibility that West Flemish does not seem to display, namely the merge of verb-based particles in the IP layer; the movement of the clause across the particles provides the sentence-final position of the particles (see Section 3).

The reason for these two differences might be one and the same: the X⁰ nature of WF particles, following Haegeman & Hill (2014), vs. the XP nature of Italian particles assumed in this paper. If Italian particles occur in the specifier positions of the projections in (43), there is no landing site for the raising of the sentential constituent which follows them. Conversely, WF particles realise the heads of the projections in (43) and do not have XP counterparts expressing meanings which are compatible with clause-internal occurrence. The different categorial nature of verb-based particles in the two languages can be correlated with their morphophonological status: WF particles are monosyllabic elements, which realise projections of the clausal spine, while Italian particles are plurisyllabic items, which occur in specifier positions.9

5.3 Particles and vocatives

Particles may combine with vocatives, which are also sentence-peripheral and addressee-related. When they co-occur, particles precede vocatives, in both sentence-initial (44) and sentence-final (45) position:

(44) a. Né Valère, men artikel is gereed (wè).
   ‘Valère, my article is finished’
   b. * Valère né, men article is gereed (wè).

(45) a. (Né) Men artikel is gereed wè Valère.
   b. * (Né) Men artikel is gereed Valère wè.

As shown by (44), vocatives behave like particles in not counting for the satisfaction of the V2 requirement. They therefore occur higher than ForceP, but lower than the particles.

9. The comparison with Romanian, which has plurisyllabic verb-based particles like Italian that are analysed by Haegeman & Hill 2014 as heads on a par with WF particles, is left to future work. The fact that a Romanian particle like hai contributes differently to the pragmatics of the utterance depending on its sentence-final or sentence-initial position (Haegeman & Hill 2013) might suggest that a revision of Haegeman & Hill’s (2014) analysis is in order.
5.4 The refinement of the analysis

In order to integrate vocatives into the structure, Haegeman & Hill (2014) suggest that the speech act projection is indeed a shell structure, namely saP SAP (similarly to vP VP). The specifier of each Speech Act Projection hosts the vocative, while the higher functional head in the shell structure is the landing site of the raised particle:

\[(46) \left[ \text{sa}_1 \text{P} \left[ \text{sa}_1 \text{né} \right] \left[ \text{SA}_1 \text{P} \text{voc} \left[ \text{SA}_1 \text{né} \right] \left[ \text{sa}_2 \text{P} \left[ \text{sa}_2 \text{wè} \right] \left[ \text{SA}_2 \text{P} \text{voc} \left[ \text{SA}_2 \text{wè} \right] \left[ \text{ForceP} \right] \right] \right] \right] \right]\]

Note that combining (43) and (46), the landing site of the fronted CP is not the specifier position of the SAP projections, but the specifier position of the saP projections.

This syntactic analysis of particles and vocatives has two advantages:

1. as with particles, the two positions assumed for vocatives account for their different pragmatic functions. The one associated with SAP1 is a “call” vocative: “It serves to identify one (or more) individual(s) (among a set) as the addressee(s) to whom the utterance is directed” (Haegeman & Hill 2014:231). The one associated with SAP2 is instead “an “address” vocative in the sense of Schegloff (1968): it is “designed to maintain or emphasize the contact between speaker and addressee” (Schaden 2005:3–4 [2010]). Associated with SAP2, the vocative has a ‘bonding’ function: the speaker qualifies or reaffirms the already established relationship with his hearer” (Haegeman & Hill 2014:231);

2. the head raising of the particle made possible by the shell structure allows the particle to precede the vocative in the superficial order (see (44)–(45)).

This analysis also raises some questions, however. The analysis overgeneralises in that it predicts orders that are not found. For example, the order ‘CP né Vocative’ should be possible on a par with ‘CP wè Vocative’, contrary to fact. Haegeman & Hill (2014:211) indeed claim that an utterance-final vocative always has a bonding function: it “serves to consolidate the existing relation of the speaker with an addressee.” But the combination of (43d) and (46) predicts that a “call” vocative should occur in final position as well. This restriction seems to suggest that the proposition does not raise as high as across the “call” vocative in specSA1P. The question is thus how to allow movement of the sentence across the highest particles but not across the highest vocative. I leave this question to future work.

In what follows, the interaction of particles and vocatives will be verified in Italian. The analysis of WF vocatives will be adapted to account for Italian vocatives.
6. Back to Italian: The interaction of discourse particles and vocatives

We now briefly discuss the syntax of vocatives in Italian and check the co-occurrence of discourse particles with vocatives.

As in WF, vocatives can occur in both sentence-initial and sentence-final position:

\[(47)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
& a. \text{Maria, vieni qui!} \\
& \quad \text{‘Maria, come here!’} \\
& b. \text{Vieni qui, Maria!} \\
& \quad \text{‘Come here, Maria!’}
\end{align*}
\]

Moro (2003) suggests that vocatives occur higher than the ForceP projection discussed by Rizzi (1997) and that their sentence-final position is obtained by remnant movement across the vocative. Moro’s analysis of Italian vocatives is essentially the same as Haegeman & Hill’s analysis of West Flemish vocatives.

Checking the co-occurrence of particles and vocatives in Italian, we consider sentence-initial and sentence-final particles in turn.

Sentence-initial particles precede the vocative, as in WF:10

\[(48)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
& a. \text{Guarda, Maria, la mia pazienza è finita.} \\
& \quad \text{‘Look, Maria, my patience is finished’} \\
& b. \text{*Maria, guarda, la mia pazienza è finita.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[(49)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
& a. \text{Sai, Maria, la mia pazienza è finita.} \\
& \quad \text{‘You know, Maria, my patience is finished’} \\
& b. \text{*Maria, sai, la mia pazienza è finita.}
\end{align*}
\]

Note that since no head movement of the particle occurs in Italian, the fact that the order ‘particle – vocative’ is found in both Italian and WF might suggest that it is not necessary to assume particle movement from the SA heads to the sa heads in WF either, differently from what is assumed in (46) above. Rather, the particle can be taken to be merged higher than the vocative.

When two initial particles co-occur, the vocative appears after both of them:11

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10. The contrast between \textit{guarda} in (48) and (52) is further evidence that the particle is not one and the same element in the two utterance peripheral positions.

Note that the sequences in (48b) and (49b) are possible if an intonational break separates the particle from the rest of the sentence. In this case, we may consider \textit{guarda} and \textit{sai} as independent speech acts.

11. The sequence in (50b) is possible in the same conditions in which (49b) is possible, see Note 10.
(50)  
  a. Guarda, sai, Maria, la mia pazienza è finita.
  b. *Guarda, Maria, sai, la mia pazienza è finita.
     ‘Look, Maria, you know, my patience is finished’

These data do not provide evidence for two independent projections hosting Italian vocatives, as individuated in (46) above for WF:

(51)  
  guarda > sai > Vocative CP

Consider now sentence-final particles. Only sentence-final sai may co-occur with vocatives, while guarda cannot; in this case, as in WF, sai precedes the vocative, (53a):12

(52)  
  a. *La mia pazienza è finita, guarda, Maria.
     ‘Look, Maria, my patience is finished’
  b. *La mia pazienza è finita, Maria, guarda.

(53)  
  a. La mia pazienza è finita, sai, Maria.
     ‘My patience is finished, you know, Maria’
  b. *La mia pazienza è finita, Maria, sai.

Remember that differently from West Flemish, no movement across sentence-initial particles takes place in Italian. This means that the order in (53a) cannot be derived by moving the sentence across the particle sai and the vocative Maria. For Italian, I suggested that sentence-final particles occur lower down in the structure, inside the IP-layer. When both the clause and the particle precede the vocative, as in (53a), it means that the particle has been taken along by the fronted constituent.

7. Conclusions

On the basis of their interpretation and their syntactic properties, sentence-initial and sentence-final particles have been shown to not occupy one and the same position in the sentence and to not be derivationally related. I have suggested that sentence-final particles are merged in the IP layer like sentence-internal particles and what follows them is moved to a higher specifier position. Sentence-initial particles are instead merged with a constituent of the CP layer.

In spite of their utterance-peripheral position, verb-based particles are part of narrow syntax. Their distribution is constrained by clause type, agreement with

12. Sentence (53b) is possible if an intonational break separates Maria from sai, which thus occurs as an independent utterance.
the addressee (as manifested by verbal morphology on the particle), and ordering restrictions in the case of co-occurrence of particles in the sentence.

Discourse particles also interact with vocatives. The different pragmatic roles of vocatives can be derived syntactically, namely by assuming that they occur in the sentence-initial Speech Act Projections, as suggested in Haegeman & Hill (2014).

Some differences between Italian and West Flemish, in particular the fact that movement across the particles in the CP layer is possible in West Flemish but not in Italian, have been correlated with the different syntactic status of discourse particles in the two languages, heads and specifiers, respectively. The comparative analysis has pointed out that some refinement of the analysis of West Flemish is presumably necessary, something which is left to future work.

References


