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Sentential Particles and Clausal Typing in the Veneto Dialects

Nicola Munaro & Cecilia Poletto

1. Introduction

In this work we describe and analyse both the syntactic and the semantic properties of a number of sentential particles (henceforth *SPs*), which can appear in some Veneto dialects in main non declarative clauses:¹

- (1) Cossa falo, *ti*?!
What does-he *prt*

The presence of these particles induces interesting interpretive effects; more generally, an investigation of their properties is relevant for the analysis of the left periphery of the clause; in addition, a detailed study of these particles turns out to have theoretical relevance for a crosslinguistic theory of clausal typing on the one hand and for a deeper understanding of the syntax-semantics interface on the other. The distribution of *SPs* also involves a number of interpretive and pragmatic distinctions that contribute to highlight the way sentence type is encoded in the syntactic structure and to provide some insights into more fine-grained distinctions internal to each sentence type.

We will systematically analyze data from two varieties, a Northern Veneto variety and an Eastern Veneto variety (*Pagotto* and *Venetian*, glossed as *Pg* and *Ve* respectively); however, the particles described here occur, with a partially different distribution, in several other dialects of the North-Eastern Italian area, which we will occasionally refer to as well.

While *SPs* can appear in main interrogatives, exclamatives or imperatives, none of them can occur in declarative clauses or in embedded contexts; furthermore, they always occur in “special” contexts, in the sense that they induce a presupposition in the clause determined either by the linguistic context or by the universe of the discourse.

The particles we consider also share the following distributional property: they can occur in sentence-final position, a fact that - we claim - can be derived by movement of the whole clause to the specifier position of the head occupied by the particle; we take this head to be a high functional head of the split CP layer, which can attract to its specifier either a *wh*-item or its whole complement. This explains why some particles can also occur either immediately after the *wh*-element or with a *wh*-item in isolation.

This is the outline of the article: in section 2 we provide a description of the syntactic properties shared by all *SPs*; in section 3 we examine more closely the interpretive properties and attempt a description of the semantic contribution of each particle; in section 4 we address the issue of the categorial status of the particles providing some arguments in favour of the hypothesis that *SPs* are heads; in section 5 we analyze in detail the syntactic derivation exploiting clause preposing; section 6 contains a summary of the article.

2. Common syntactic properties of sentence particles

¹ The content of this article has been presented at the *XXIX IGG* meeting in Urbino (13th-15th February 2003), at the *Dislocated Elements Workshop* in Berlin (28th-30th November 2003) and at the *GURT* conference in Georgetown (26th-29th March 2004); we thank those audiences as well as Paola Benincà, Guglielmo Cinque, Alessandra Giorgi, Hans Obenauer for helpful comments and suggestions; special thanks go to Paul Portner and Raffaella Zanuttini for patiently discussing some of the semantic aspects of the issue addressed in section 3; needless to say, the responsibility for any mistakes rests entirely on us. This article develops and elaborates some aspects of Munaro & Poletto (2002a), (2002b), (forthc.); although the paper is the product of a constant collaboration of the two authors, for the concerns of the Italian academy Nicola Munaro takes responsibility for sections 1-3 and Cecilia Poletto for sections 4-6.

As mentioned above, the *SPs* attested in the two dialects examined here share the following distributional properties:

- (2) a *SPs* usually occur in sentence-final position;
- b those *SPs* which can occur immediately after the *wh*-element can also cooccur with the *wh*-item in isolation;
- c *SPs* are sensitive to the clause type: they cannot occur in declarative clauses;
- d *SPs* never occur in embedded contexts;
- e *SPs* can/must be followed by right emarginated constituents.

With respect to the first property, the sentence-final position is always available for the particle, independently of the clause type it is associated with.

As shown by the following examples, the particle *ti* occurs exclusively in main *wh*-questions, and the only possible position is the sentence-final one:²

- (3) a Dove valo, ti? Ve
- b *Ti, dove valo?
- [Ti] where goes-he [ti]
- (4) a Dove zelo ndà, ti? Ve
- b *Dove zelo, ti, ndà?
- Where has-he [ti] gone [ti]

The particle *mo*, which can appear both in imperative and in interrogative clauses, can always appear in sentence-final position but never in sentence initial position, as witnessed by the following contrasts:

- (5) a Parècia sta minestra, mo! Pg
- b *Mo parècia sta minestra!
- [Mo] prepare this soup [mo]
- (6) a Vien qua, mo! Ve
- b *Mo, vien qua!
- [Mo] come here [mo]
- (7) a Ali magnà, mo? Pg
- b *Mo, ali magnà?
- [Mo] have-they eaten [mo]
- (8) a Quando rivelo, mo? Pg
- b *Mo, quando rivelo?
- [Mo] when arrives-he [mo]

The sentence-final occurrence is also attested with the particles *po* and *lu*, appearing in interrogative and exclamative contexts respectively:

- (9) a Quando eli rivadi, po? Pg
- When have-they arrived po
- b Eli partidi, po? Pg
- Have-they left po

²In all the examples we report in this article the presence of a comma setting off the particle should be intended as expressing not an intonational break isolating the particle from the rest of the clause, but rather a change in the intonational contour of the clause, not necessarily inducing a parenthetical interpretation.

- | | | | |
|------|---|------------------------------|----|
| (10) | a | Dove zeì ndai po? | Ve |
| | | Where have-they gone po | |
| | b | Zeì ndai via, po? | Ve |
| | | Have-they gone away po | |
| (11) | a | L'`a piovest, lu! | Pg |
| | b | (*Lu) l'`a (*lu) piovest! | |
| | | [Lu] it has [lu] rained [lu] | |

Secondly, among those *SPs* that occur in *wh*-contexts, some can also occur immediately after the *wh*-item and with a *wh*-item in isolation; this is the case of the particles *mo* and *po* in Pagotto, as exemplified in (12)-(15), but not of *ti*, for example, as illustrated in (16):³

- | | | | | | |
|------|---|----------------------------------|----|------------|----|
| (12) | a | Quando rivar`ali, mo? | Pg | | |
| | b | Quando, mo, rivar`ali? | | | |
| | | When [mo] arrive-fut-they [mo] | | | |
| (13) | a | Che mo? | b | And`e mo? | Pg |
| | | What mo | | Where mo | |
| (14) | a | Quando eli rivadi, po? | Pg | | |
| | b | Quando, po, eli rivadi? | | | |
| | | When [po] have-they arrived [po] | | | |
| (15) | a | And`e po? | b | Quando po? | Pg |
| | | Where po | | When po | |
| (16) | a | *Dove, ti, zelo nd`a? | Ve | | |
| | b | *Dove ti | | | |
| | | Where [ti] has-he gone | | | |

Thirdly, all *SPs* are sensitive to clause type: the examples reported above show that *SPs* always occur in interrogative, exclamative or imperative clauses and are never found in declarative clauses; in addition, they always convey a presuppositional entailment which we try to depict in greater detail below.

Finally, the occurrence of *SPs* is restricted to main contexts; as shown by the following data,

³ As discussed in Munaro (1997), Pagotto belongs to the group of Northern Italian dialects in which some classes of *wh*-items can appear either sentence initially or sentence internally in main *wh*-questions; however, the position of the *wh*-item does not seem to interact in a relevant way with the presence of the particle. With respect to the particle *po*, the *wh*-element *parch`e* displays a special behaviour, as in Pagotto the position after the *wh*-item is preferred to the sentence-final one:

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| (i) | a | Parch`e po `eli `ndadi via? |
| | b | ?Parch`e `eli `ndadi via, po? |
| | c | ?Po, parch`e eli `ndadi via? |
| | | [Po] why [po] have-they gone away [po] |

As witnessed by (ic), the sentence initial position of *po* is not excluded in Pagotto; we leave a more detailed investigation of this fact for future research.

In Venetian *parch`e* is the only *wh*-item that can be immediately followed by *po* and be used in isolation with the particle, as shown by the data in (ii) :

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| (ii) | a | *Dove, po, zeì ndai? |
| | | Where po have-they gone |
| | b | Parch`e, po, i ze/zeli ndai via? |
| | c | Parch`e po? |
| | | Why [po] (they-have/have-they gone away) |

particles are banned from embedded clauses, independently of the clause type they are associated with:

- (17) a El me ga domandà dove (*ti) che i ze ndai (*ti)Ve
He-me-has asked where [ti] that they-have gone [ti]
b No so dirte quando(*ti) che i é partidi (*ti) Pg
I can't tell you when [ti] that they-have left [ti]
- (18) a I me a domandà cossa (*mo) che avon fat (*mo) Pg
They-have asked me what [mo] that we have done [mo]
b No so andé (*mo) che i é ndadi (*mo) Pg
I don'y know where [mo] that they-have gone [mo]
- (19) a I me à domandà parché (*po) che l' à parlà (*po) Pg
They-me-have asked why [po] that he-has spoken [po]
b No so dove (*po) che el ze ndà (*po) Ve
I don't know where [po] that he-has gone [po]
- (20) L' à dit (*lu) che l' à piovest (*lu), ieri sera (*lu)⁴ Pg
He-has said [lu] that it-has rained [lu] yesterday evening [lu]

The distributional constraint on main clauses suggests that the presence of the particle entails the activation of (some portion of) the CP-layer, where the main *vs* embedded distinction is encoded (cf. Rizzi (1997) among others).⁵

⁴ Notice that *lu* is compatible with a subjective clause, that can be either preceded or followed by the particle:

- (i) a L'é meio, lu, che te vegne ale nove
b L'é meio che te vegne ale nove, lu
It is better [lu] that you-come at nine [lu]
- (ii) a L'é bel, lu, sveiarse tardi ala matina
b L'é bel sveiarse tardi ala matina, lu
It is nice [lu] to wake up late in the morning [lu]

Incidentally, these data provide evidence that *lu* is not a tonic pronoun in these contexts.

⁵ We address this issue more thoroughly in the next sections. A further common distributional feature concerns the fact that all *SPs* are incompatible with sentential negation, as shown by the Venetian imperative in (i) and the Pagotto interrogatives and exclamatives in (ii) and (iii):

- (i) *No sta farlo, mo!
Don't do it, mo
- (ii) a *Andé no i é/éli ndadi, ti?
Where not they-have/have-they gone, ti
b *No i a/ali fat che, mo?
Not they-have/have-they done what, mo
- (iii) a *No l' à piovest, lu
Not it-has rained, lu
b *No l' é rivà (lu) nisuni, (lu)
Not it-has arrived (lu) anybody (lu)

The Pagotto examples in (iv) might suggest that the particle *mo* is indeed compatible with negation in *yes/no* questions:

- (iv) a No i gnen, mo?
Not they-come, mo
b No te dis gnent, mo?
Not you-say anything, mo

Notice furthermore that arguments are generally emarginated to the right (as witnessed by the presence of resumptive clitics) in interrogative clauses containing a particle:

- | | | | |
|------|---|---|----|
| (21) | a | Dove le gavarò messe, ti, le ciave?! | Ve |
| | | Where clacc have-fut-I put, ti, the keys | |
| | b | Quando lo àla magnà, mo, al polastro?! | Pg |
| | | When clacc has-she eaten, mo, the chicken | |

However, this effect is not due to the presence of the particle, but is a general property of main *wh*-questions (cf. Antinucci & Cinque (1977) and Munaro, Poletto & Pollock (2001) for further discussion on this issue).

This effect in fact not attested in imperative clauses, where an object DP or an embedded clause can either occur in its canonical position or be right emarginated after the particle:

- | | | | |
|------|---|--|-------|
| (22) | a | Magna sta minestra, mo! | Ve/Pg |
| | b | Magna, mo, sta minestra! | Ve |
| | c | Magnela, mo, sta minestra! | Pg |
| | | Eat (cl) [mo] this soup [mo] | |
| (23) | a | Gnen qua che finison sto laoro, mo! | Pg |
| | b | Gnen qua, mo, che finison sto laoro! | |
| | | Come here [mo] that we finish this work [mo] | |
| (24) | a | Vien che fazemo sta roba, mo! | Ve |
| | b | Vien mo, che fazemo sta roba! | |
| | | Come [mo] that we do this thing [mo] | |

In the case of the particle *lu*, which occurs in *yes/no* exclamatives, adverbials are also preferably right emarginated:

- | | | | |
|------|---|------------------------------------|----|
| (25) | a | L'à piovest, lu, ieri sera | Pg |
| | b | ??L'à piovest ieri sera, lu | |
| | | It has rained [lu] last night [lu] | |
| (26) | a | L'é fret, lu, qua dentro | Pg |
| | b | ?L'é fret, qua dentro, lu | |
| | | It is cold [lu] inside here [lu] | |

Finally, it should be pointed out first that the *SPs* considered here behave differently from other particles attested in the Veneto dialects as well as in other Northern Italian dialects, which are characterized by two properties not shared by the particles we have examined: they occur in initial position and have no presuppositional import. This is the case of the particle *e* in the Southern Veneto dialect of Taglio di Po, which marks the exclamative illocutionary force of the utterance in which it occurs; as shown by (27) and (28), in this variety an exclamative clause is fully grammatical only if the particle *e* appears in sentence initial position:

- | | | | |
|------|---|--|--------------|
| (27) | a | <i>E c bel libro c l' à scritto!</i> | Taglio di Po |
| | b | * <i>C(he) bel libro c l' à scritto e!</i> | |
| | | [E] what a nice book that he-has written [e] | |

However, as discussed by several authors (cf. among others Portner & Zanuttini (1998)) negation in *yes/no* questions is an instance of the so called *expletive negation*, which has only a presuppositional value, and does not perform the function of a real negative marker; as a consequence, the generalization that all the *SPs* we consider are incompatible with real sentential negation holds; for the time being, we do not have an explanation for this fact and leave a deeper investigation of this issue for future research.

- (28) a **Che bel libro c l' à scritto!* Taglio di Po
 What a nice book that he-has written
 b **Co beo!*⁶
 How nice

We suggest that particles like *e* have a purely typing function and consequently are obligatory in the clause type they mark. This is not the case for our *SPs*, which seem at first sight optional, although, as we claim, they contribute to convey a special meaning.

In the next sections we will analyze all the syntactic properties listed here, trying to provide a plausible unified account for all of them.

3. On the interpretive contribution of the particles

In this section we attempt a more thorough description of the contexts in which *SPs* are attested, thereby sketching an account of the semantic contribution of each particle to the interpretation of the clause.

3.1 *Ti*

As already mentioned, *ti* only appears in *wh*-questions and is not compatible with *yes/no* questions:

- (29) a Quando sarali rivadi, ti? Pg
 b Sarali rivadi quando, ti?
 [When] be-fut-they arrived [when], ti
- (30) a *Saràli rivadi, ti? Pg
 Be-fut-they arrived, ti
 b *I ze partii, ti? Ve
 They-have left, ti

Ti questions can have two different interpretive shades and both correspond to non-canonical interpretations of the question. Under the first interpretation, which can be identified with Obenauer (1994)'s "can't find the value" (henceforth *Cfv*) reading, the speaker has already unsuccessfully tried to find an answer to the *wh*-question.⁷ The second interpretation is a surprise/reproach (henceforth *Sr*) interpretation: in this case the speaker already knows the answer, so that the question conveys a sense of surprise and reproach.⁸

We propose that the function of *ti* is in both cases to signal that the value of the variable is outside the set of canonical values.⁹

⁶ The element *co* is used only in exclamative clauses and can exclusively modify adjectives.

⁷ This type of questions can only be self-addressed questions; interestingly, both in Venetian and in Pagotto (as exemplified in (ia) and (ib)), *ti* cannot appear in questions which display an overtly realized complementizer *che* and subjunctive mood:

- (i) a Cossa che el gabia fato, (??ti)?
 What that he-have-subj done (ti)
 b Che'l sia 'ndat andé, (??ti)?
 That he-be-subj gone where (ti)

Questions of the type exemplified in (i) are also self-addressed questions, which might be taken to show that self-addressing in questions cuts across questions types.

⁸For a more detailed analysis of questions with this particular type of pragmatic salience, the reader is referred to Poletto (2000:67 ff.) and Munaro & Obenauer (2002).

⁹The reader is referred to Obenauer (1994) and (2004) for a more precise analysis of non standard questions; Obenauer (1994:III.1(47)) provides the following definition for non-standard questions:

Suppose that the canonical way of interpreting a question is to present a class of possible answers and invite the addressee to select one: *ti* signals a non-canonical interpretation of the question, that is, the fact that the addressee is not allowed to choose a value for the variable from inside the set. So, the common feature shared by both the interpretations associated with the presence of *ti* is the fact that the answer drawn from the set specified by the *wh*-item is not sufficient and/or relevant. Let us now determine more in detail what semantic property these two interpretations share: in the *Cfv* interpretation all the likely answers to the *wh* question have already been tried and excluded by the speaker, while in the *Sr* interpretation the value of the variable is already identified but it is outside the set of plausible values defined by the context (cf. Obenauer (2004)). Interestingly, the choice between the two interpretations seems to be connected to the verbal features, as present and past trigger the *Sr* interpretation more easily, while future favours the *Cfv* one:¹⁰

- | | | | |
|------|---|--|----|
| (31) | a | Dove le gavarò messe, ti?
Where cl have-fut-I put, ti | Ve |
| | b | Cossa avarali magnà, ti?
What have-fut-they eaten, ti | Pg |
| (32) | a | Andé eli ndadi, ti?
Where have-they gone, ti | Pg |
| | b | Cossa sì drio magnar, ti?
What are-you eating, ti | Ve |

The choice is performed via different mood marking: both in *Cfv* questions and in *Sr* questions the activation of a modal feature may be involved, most likely an epistemic modality in the former case and an evaluative modality in the latter (cf. Munaro & Obenauer (2002) for a specific proposal on the second type of questions).¹¹

The fact that modality is relevant to the interpretation of the question could provide an explanation for why *ti*, unlike other particles, always requires the whole clause, and not simply the *wh*-item, in its specifier. If the modal feature must be in a local structural relation with the particle, there are a priori two possible ways to satisfy this requirement: since *ti* has no affixal properties, left-adjunction of the finite verb to the particle via head movement is excluded, so we are left with the option of pied-piping the whole clause up to the specifier of the particle.¹²

(i) Dans le domaine défini par les traits restrictifs de l'opérateur et parcouru par la variable ("domaine de variation"), il n'existe aucun élément qui constitue une valeur appropriée de la variable à ses yeux.

“Within the domain defined by the restrictive features of the operator and followed by the variable (“domain of variation”) there exists no element constituting an appropriate value for the variable to his eyes.”

¹⁰ Notice that *Cfv* questions with *ti* are incompatible with second person subjects, which is probably due to the fact that the speaker excludes the possibility of getting an answer from the addressee:

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| (i) | a | *Andé sareo ndadi, ti? |
| | b | *Dove sarì ndai, ti?
Where be-fut-you gone, ti |

¹¹ In these dialects, future is rarely used with a temporal value, but has rather modal properties, as is shown by examples like the following:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| (i) | I ze drio batter ala porta. Sarà Gianni.
They are knocking at the door. (It) will-be John
'Somebody is knocking at the door. Probably it's John' |
|-----|--|

As illustrated by the English translation, the use of the future triggers an epistemic interpretation, i.e. the speaker wonders who might be knocking at the door.

¹² As for the fact that *ti* occurs only in *wh*-interrogatives and not in *yes/no* questions, this may depend on the fact that in the latter the variable can have either a positive or a negative value; since these two values exhaust the set, there is no

In the *Sr* interpretation not only does the speaker know that the value of the variable is outside the set; the set is defined either on the basis of acceptable values (producing the reproach reading) or on the basis of the expected values (producing the surprise interpretation).

The two basic meanings of the *Sr* question type are thus derived from the typing of the set of possible values, which can be either expected or acceptable.

3.2 *Mo*

As mentioned above, the particle *mo* has a different distribution in Venetian and Pagotto, as only in the latter dialect it can occur both in interrogatives and in imperatives.

We propose that *mo* can have the following values in the structures examined: it introduces a *presupposition* and/or it expresses what has been defined in the literature as a *point of view*. From these two properties we derive its interpretive import in the two dialects under investigation; in Pagotto *mo* encodes ‘point of view’ because it expresses a reference to the person to whose benefit the action has to be performed (either the speaker or the hearer): imperatives with *mo* are uttered to the benefit of a class of persons which includes the hearer (a similar information is conveyed by the particles *mo/ma* in the Raethoromance variety of Badiotto, as discussed by Poletto & Zanuttini (2003)):

- | | | | |
|------|---|---|----|
| (33) | a | Magna, mo (che te diventa grant)!
Eat, mo, (so that you grow up) | Pg |
| | b | Ledelo, mo (che te capisarà tut)!
Read it, mo, (so that you’ll understand everything) | Pg |
| (34) | a | Nèteme le scarpe, mo (che sion in ritardo)!
Clean my shoes, mo, (that we are late) | Pg |
| | b | Parèceme da magnar, mo (che dopo avon da ‘ndar via)!
Cook for me, mo, (that later we have to go) | Pg |

Sentences like the ones illustrated in (50) are clearly uttered to the advantage of the hearer, while those in (51) are felicitous only if they are uttered in a context in which both the speaker and the hearer benefit from the action performed.¹³

As for the role of *mo* in imperatives in Venetian, it can be informally characterized as expressing the confirmation of an order already given, requiring that the action be performed immediately; as such it is not compatible with adverbs expressing future time:

- | | | | |
|------|---|--|----|
| (35) | a | Ciamime (*tra un’ora), mo!
Call me (in an hour), mo | Ve |
| | b | Lezilo (*doman), mo!
Read it (tomorrow), mo | |

In Venetian imperatives *mo* is sensitive to the time of the utterance, as it signals that the utterance time and the event time must coincide.¹⁴ In addition to this, the use of *mo* presupposes that the hearer does not intend to obey the speaker’s order. The combination of these two factors, that is, the presupposition and the coincidence between utterance and performance time, yields a semantic

third value to be placed outside the set.

¹³ The distinction concerning *point of view* attested in Pagotto is not relevant in Venetian, as *mo* can appear in the following imperative clauses expressing an order whose performance is exclusively to the advantage either of the hearer or of the speaker:

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| (i) | a | Vien mo, che te iuto!
Come mo, that I help you |
| | b | Vien mo, che ti me porti casa!
Come mo, that you take me home |

¹⁴ In these dialects *mo* is not used other than as a particle. In Central and Southern Italian dialects it has retained its original meaning, ‘now’.

effect characterized by Venetian informants as ‘reinforcement of the order’.

In imperatives *mo* expresses two distinct values in the two dialects under investigation, but the reading conveyed by *mo* in Pagotto interrogatives is partially similar to the one expressed in Venetian imperatives because in both cases *mo* clearly carries a presupposition about the addressee’s intentions (as said above, *mo* does not appear in Venetian interrogatives). We surmise that in *mo* interrogatives both a presupposition and a point of view are involved, the interpretation depending on the position of the *SP*:

- | | | | |
|------|---|---|----|
| (36) | a | Quando rivaràli, mo? | Pg |
| | b | Quando, mo, rivaràli?
When [mo] arrive-fut-they [mo] | |

When *mo* is sentence-final, as in (36a), the speaker expresses the fact that the present situation does not conform to his expectations, a fact which, due to the presence of the point of view, might have negative consequences: in (36) the presence of *mo* suggests that the speaker fears that the delay may be due to some unfortunate event which has involved the subject of the clause. If *Point of view* is encoded by a modal projection in the higher portion of IP (cf. Poletto & Zanuttini (2003)), then IP raising is necessary for the intended interpretation to obtain, as is the case with *ti* (as represented in structure (47) below). When the particle occurs immediately after the *wh*-item, like in (36b) (as depicted in structure (54 below)), *mo* introduces the speaker’s opinion that the addressee does not intend to answer, so that he is forced to repeating his question. Hence, what is expressed in this case is not the speaker’s fear that something dangerous might have happened, but just the speaker’s impatience; given the absence of point of view, the clause need not raise as a whole and the *wh*-item can, and must, raise alone.¹⁵

We can conclude that both in Venetian imperatives and in Pagotto interrogatives (with the particle following the *wh*-item) the effect of reinforcement perceived by our informants results from the presupposition that *mo* carries.

3.3 *Po*

Also in the case of *po* the interpretation of the sentence depends on the position of the particle, which, as mentioned above, can appear either sentence-final or immediately after the *wh*-item:

- | | | | |
|------|---|---|----|
| (37) | a | Quando eli rivadi, po? | Pg |
| | b | Quando, po, eli rivadi?
When [po] have-they arrived [po] | |

We claim that the contribution of *po* to the interpretation of the clause consists of two components: the fact that the set of the answers specified by the *wh*-item is ordered according to a probability scale (along the lines of Portner & Zanuttini (1998)’s analysis of exclamative clauses) and that the

¹⁵ A similar distinction between two different dialects is found the Rhaetoromance varieties spoken in the Badia valley; in the dialect spoken in S.Leonardo *mo* exclusively expresses the speaker’s point of view:

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| (i) | a | Arzignem mo le bagn
Prepare-me mo the bath |
| | b | *Töt mo n’de d vacanza
Take mo a day of holiday |

The ungrammaticality of (ib), which is uttered to the benefit of the addressee, shows that in this dialect the particle *mo* expresses an order to be performed to the benefit of the speaker. In the minimally different dialect of S.Vigilio di Marebbe *mo* encodes an order to be performed immediately and as such it is incompatible with adverbial forms of duration or referring to a point in the future:

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| (ii) | a | Dayrela mo (*te siis mensc)
Open-it mo (*in six months) |
| | b | Comportete mo (*entrees) bun
Behave-refl mo (*always) well |

most probable values have already been tried and excluded.

When *po* immediately follows the *wh*-item, like in (37b), the speaker knows that the event was supposed to take place and is asking for a confirmation. This position triggers an interpretation in which the possible values for the variable have been ordered according to a probability scale derived through the context, and the most probable ones have been excluded.

Sentence-final *po*, in (37a), in addition to the ordering of the possible values and the exclusion of the most probable ones, also requires the speaker's reference to a preceding communicative situation that has been left suspended and is taken up again at present; we suggest that the speaker's reference to a previous situation might be connected to the activation of the *Tense* projection, which, being relevant for this interpretation, must move to the specifier of the particle, pied piping the whole clause (as in the cases of *ti* and *mo*).^{16 17}

3.4 *Lu*

The occurrence of the particle *lu* is limited to non-constituent exclamatives presenting the whole propositional content as unexpected:

- | | | | |
|------|---|--|----|
| (38) | a | L'è frèt, lu
It-is cold [lu] | Pg |
| | b | L'è rivà al to amico, lu
It-has arrived your friend, lu | Pg |

So, in the two examples in (38) the speaker becomes aware of an unexpected matter of fact: in (38a) he realizes that the temperature is lower than he expected, while in (38b) he is surprised about the fact that the addressee's friend has arrived. What is presupposed in the two cases in (38) is that it is warm and that the friend is not coming.

Lu is not compatible with constituent exclamatives in which a *wh*-phrase has been fronted to the sentence initial position, as shown by the following examples:

- | | | |
|------|---|----|
| (39) | Che fret (*lu) che l'è incoi (*lu)
How cold [lu] that it-is today [lu] | Pg |
| (40) | Quant (*lu) che l'à piovest ieri sera (*lu)
How much [lu] that it-has rained last night [lu] | |

We will limit ourselves to suggesting that the semantic function of *lu* consists in introducing a presupposition; in this case the proposition described by the clause corresponds to either of the two possible truth values; *lu* indicates that the situation described by the sentence is contrary to the speaker's expectations, so the interpretive feature associated with *lu* may be reduced to the choice of the contextually less probable value (between the two a priori conceivable ones).

In this respect the interpretive contribution of *lu* in signalling that the situation holds contrary to

¹⁶ Indeed, this additional interpretation is excluded in Venetian with a future tense:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| (i) | % Quando sarali rivai, po
When be-fut-they arrived po |
|-----|--|

As mentioned above, in Pagotto *po* is also attested in sentence initial position, both in *yes/no* and in *wh*-questions:

- | | |
|------|---|
| (ii) | a Po, éli rivadi?
b Po, quando éli rivadi?
Po [when] are-they arrived |
|------|---|

In both cases the presence of *po* conveys the speaker's mild surprise about the fact that the event has taken place, rather than focalizing the question on whether they have arrived or not or on the actual time of their arrival; hence the event is presented as unexpected given the context, and the value of the variable does not seem to be relevant.

¹⁷ How exactly the speaker's reference to a previous situation is related to the activation of the *Tense* projection is a topic that we leave for future research.

expectations resembles the semantic function performed by *mica* in standard Italian (cf. Cinque (1976)); in this sense, *lu* could be viewed as the positive counterpart of *mica*.¹⁸

4. Sentential particles as X^o categories

A priori, *SPs* can be analyzed either as heads or as specifiers. In this section we will provide empirical evidence that *SPs* are heads because they obey the same restrictions holding for object clitics in Romance, as originally noted by Kayne (1975). The head status of the *SPs* is suggested by the fact that they cannot be modified or focalized on a par with object clitics:

(41)	a	*Cossa gali fato, proprio ti?!	Ve
		What have-they done, just ti	
	b	*Zeli partii, proprio po?	Ve
		Have-they left, just po	
	c	*Quando riveli, proprio mo?!	Pg
		When arrive-they, just mo	
	d	*L' é fret incoi, proprio lu!	Pg
		It-is cold today, just lu	
(42)	a	*Cossa gali fato, TI?!	Ve
		What have-they done TI	
	b	*Quando riveli, MO?!	Pg
		When arrive-they MO	
	c	*Eli partidi, PO?	Pg
		Have-they left PO	
	d	*L' é fret incoi, LU!	Pg
		It-is cold today LU	

The ungrammaticality of (41) and (42) and the fact that *SPs* cannot be used in isolation would be completely unexpected if *SPs* were located in some specifier position.¹⁹

Evidence for the head status of *SPs* is also provided by their diachronic evolution: two of these particles, namely *ti* and *lu*, were originally tonic pronouns, the second singular and third singular masculine forms respectively; however, they have a different distribution with respect to subject pronouns.

The particle *ti* is compatible with third person subjects and can cooccur with the omophonous tonic pronominal subject *ti*:

¹⁸According to Cinque (1976), the presence of *mica* widens the presuppositions already present with negative polarity; by using *mica* the speaker intends to negate somebody's expectation rather than an assertion:

- (i) a. Non e freddo oggi
 b. Non è *mica* freddo oggi
 Not is [mica] cold today

So, while in (ia) the speaker neutrally states that it is not cold, in (ib) he wants to emphatically deny the common expectation that it is cold.

¹⁹As shown by the following examples from standard Italian, object clitics cannot be modified, contrastively focalized or used in isolation:

- (i) a. *Proprio *lo* ho incontrato
 Just him have met
 b. *LO ho incontrato, non lei
 HIM have met, not her
 c. Chi hai visto? *Lo
 Whom have you seen? Him

The striking interpretive similarity of our particles with old Indo-European sentential particles suggests that particles could be analyzed like clitic-second elements, which occurred after the first constituent of the clause in old Indo-European languages (see Vai (2005) and Luraghi (???)); in our case the constituent preceding the particle is either the clause or the *wh*-item.

- | | | | |
|------|---|--|----|
| (43) | a | Dove zelo ndà, ti?
Where has-he gone, ti | Ve |
| | b | Ti, dove ti ze 'ndà, ti?
You, where you-have gone, ti | Ve |

The particle *lu* is compatible with a singular or plural third person subject (though not with first and second person subjects):²⁰

- | | | | |
|------|---|---|----|
| (44) | a | L'é rivà al to amigo, lu
It-has arrived your friend, lu | Pg |
| | b | L'é riva i to amighi, lu
It-has arrived your friends, lu | Pg |
| (45) | a | *Son vegnest anca mi, lu
Have come also I, lu | Pg |
| | b | *Te sé rivà anca ti, lu
You-have arrived also you, lu | Pg |
| | c | *Sion partidi anca noi, lu
Have left also we, lu | Pg |

Moreover, while the particle *lu* is restricted to third person subject clauses in Pagotto, this restriction does not hold in Paduan, where, as discussed in Benincà (1996), *lu* may appear in exclamatives and is compatible with first, second and third person subjects:²¹

- | | | | |
|------|---|--|--------|
| (46) | a | A ghe go dito tuto a me sorèla, mi, lu!
A cl-dat-have told everything to my sister, I, lu | Paduan |
| | b | A te ghe fato ben, ti, lu!
A you-have done well, you, lu | |
| | c | A le gera vignù trovarte, le toze, lu!
A they-had come see you, your daughters, lu | |

²⁰ Notice however that a preverbal subject is compatible with *lu* only if it is 3rd person singular:

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| (i) | a | Al to amigo l'é rivà, lu
Your friend he-has arrived, lu |
| | b | I to amighi i é rivadi, lori/*lu
Your friends they-have arrived, they/lu |

Furthermore, *lu* is generally compatible with postverbal subjects and induces a contrastive focalization of the subject with any verb class:

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| (ii) | a | L'à magnà tut al tozatel, lu
He-has eaten everything the child, lu |
| | b | L'à laorà to fradel, lu, incoi
He-has worked your brother, lu, today |
| (iii) | | L'é rivà (anca/proprio) to fradel, lu
He-has arrived (also/just) your brother, lu |

The non-contrastive interpretation is possible only if the subject follows the particle:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| (iv) | | L'é rivà, lu, to fradel (atu vist?)
He-has arrived, lu, your brother (have-you seen?) |
|------|--|--|

²¹ Moreover, *lu* is compatible with adjectival predicates with a feminine ending:

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| (i) | | L'é vera, (lu), che i é tornadi, (lu)
It-is true (lu) that they-have come back (lu) |
|-----|--|--|

On the basis of these data, *ti* and *lu* cannot be analyzed as personal pronouns, although the diachronic connection is clearly witnessed by the omophony of the two forms.

As for the other two particles, *mo* and *po*, they were most probably temporal adverbs in origin, *po* being connected to Latin *post* ('afterwards', cf. Pellegrini (1972)) and *mo* to Latin *modo* ('now', cf. among others Rohlfs (1969); *mo* does in fact still retain the original temporal meaning in the Central and Southern Italian dialects).²²

Based on this evidence, we propose that *SPs* are the result of a grammaticalization process which includes a phonological as well as a semantic impoverishment along with the development of special syntactic properties; such a process is generally attested in the case of elements becoming the overt realization of (marked values of) functional heads, and not with specifiers. Hence, we propose to analyze the *SPs* considered here as filling functional heads located in a layered CP field (cf. Rizzi (1997)).

5. Clause fronting to [*Spec,Prt*]

We propose to account for the fact that all *SPs* can occur in sentence-final position under the assumption that *SPs* are located in a head position of the CP layer and that their sentence-final position is derived via movement of their clausal complement to their specifier; more precisely, we take the clausal complement to coincide with the structural portion of the sentence dominated by the functional projection labelled *Interrogative Force* in Munaro, Poletto & Pollock (2001) and containing the *wh*-item – when present – in its specifier, as illustrated in (47):

(47) $[_{FP} \text{Int-ForceP}_i [_{F^o} \textit{particle}] [_{\text{Int-ForceP}} t_i]]$

The hypothesis that *SPs* are located very high in the structure and that the whole clause must raise across them might seem at first sight a rather *ad hoc* proposal. We will therefore compare this analysis with the null hypothesis, namely with the view that *SPs* are located in the low position inside the IP field, showing that the null hypothesis encounters a number of problems; in addition, there are empirical arguments suggesting that these particles belong to the CP-layer.²³

Firstly, we have to exclude that *SPs* are generated inside the VP, as they have no argumental status. The assumption that *SPs* are located very low in the IP field would force us to the problematic conclusion that, given their sentence-final positioning, all arguments must have vacated the VP; if this analysis might in principle be conceivable for object DPs (which move out of the VP in order to get case in some agreement projection), it looks much less plausible for PPs, which, not being in need of structural case, have no trigger for scrambling out of the VP.²⁴

Secondly, given that low functional projections have in general aspectual value, we would expect that these particles also do. As we will see below, this is not the case; on the contrary, the interpretation triggered by the presence of *SPs* concerns semantic and pragmatic aspects such as presupposition, point of view, and presentation of the event, which are usually encoded in the left periphery of the clause.

Thirdly, the syntactic behaviour of *SPs* suggests that they belong to the highest functional domain:

²²To the best of our knowledge, apart from traditional etymological work, no serious investigation has yet been undertaken on this subject; so our remarks are necessarily highly speculative; it should also be pointed out that examples containing sentential particles would anyhow be hard to find in most written texts, and, even in that case, it would be extremely hard to determine the exact interpretative shade associated with them.

²³As we have shown in a forthcoming article, these particles, which were originally either adverbs or pronouns, have undergone a grammaticalization process which has caused the loss of the original lexical meaning and the development of functional properties. If they were to be analyzed as lexical elements, as suggested to us by an anonymous reviewer, they should necessarily be viewed as adverbial elements located, according to Cinque (1999)'s hierarchy, in functional specifiers of the middle field, which can not be the case, as argued in the main text.

²⁴Moreover, the structural position of the particle should be in that case the lowest specifier position above the VPprojection: if it were a head, it would block verb movement and if it were not the lowest functional specifier, we would expect it to be followed by low adverbs.

as shown above, they are not found in embedded contexts: this asymmetry is a typical property of phenomena involving the CP field (like for example *V2*, *do*-support, subject clitic inversion, etc.); to the best of our knowledge, no elements of the low inflectional field are sensitive to the main *versus* embedded status of the clause in which they occur.

After claiming that *SPs* are located in a head position of the CP layer and that their sentence-final occurrence is derived via movement of their clausal complement, the Int-ForceP, to their specifier, we intend to show now that the relation between *SPs* and the preceding clause does indeed display the properties of the structural spec-head relation.

As is well known, parentheticals cannot intervene between a head and its specifier, while they can intervene between two maximal projections.²⁵ Therefore, we can use parentheticals as a diagnostic test for spec-head relations; the following examples show that it is not possible to insert a parenthetical expression between the clause and any *SP*:

- | | | | |
|------|---|---|----|
| (48) | a | *L' à piovest, son sicur, lu, ieri sera | Pg |
| | | It-has rained, I'm sure, lu, last night | |
| | b | *Cossa falo, diseme, ti? | Ve |
| | | What does-he, tell me, ti | |
| | c | *Vien, sa, mo! | Ve |
| | | Come, you know, mo | |

Under the proposed analysis, the natural question arises as to whether all the particles are located in the same head or whether each particle occupies a different head position within the split CP range. As we will discuss in the next section, there are reasons to believe that each particle marks a different semantic value.²⁶ There is, however, a more straightforward syntactic argument for the hypothesis that *SPs* occupy different head positions inside the CP layer; interestingly, the particles *ti* and *po* can cooccur, in a rigid order in which *po* precedes *ti*:

- | | | |
|------|----------------------------|----|
| (49) | Quando eli rivadi, po, ti? | Pg |
|------|----------------------------|----|

If the two particles cooccur, it is obvious that they cannot be located in the same head. According to our account there are two possible analyses of the sequence in (49), which can be derived either as in (50) or as in (51):

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| (50) | a | [[ti] [po] [Int-ForceP quando eli rivadi]] |
| | b | [[ti] [[Int-ForceP quando eli rivadi] _x [po]] t _x] |
| | c | [[[[Int-ForceP quando eli rivadi] _x [po]] t _x] _y [ti]] t _y] |
| (51) | a | [[po] [ti] [Int-ForceP quando eli rivadi]] |
| | b | [[po] [[Int-ForceP quando eli rivadi] _x [ti]] t _x] |
| | c | [[[Int-ForceP quando eli rivadi] _x [po]] [t _x [ti]] t _x] |

As illustrated, we can hypothesize two different initial sequences, depending on the relative linear order of the two particles. If *ti* is higher than *po*, like in (50a), we have movement of the interrogative clause into the specifier of *po*, like in (50b), and the final word order in (50c) is obtained by raising the whole constituent formed by the clause and the particle *po* into the specifier of *ti*. In the second derivation, with *po* higher than *ti*, like in (51a), the Int-ForceP raises, through the specifier of *ti*, up to the specifier of *po*. Beside the different initial order, the difference between the two alternatives lies in the second step of the derivation: only in the former case does the moved

²⁵ The general constraint blocking the insertion of parenthetical elements, and of lexical material in general, between a head and its specifier, follows straightforwardly from the antisymmetric approach of Kayne (1994), which excludes multiple specifiers, which, non asymmetrically c-commanding each other, cannot be linearized.

²⁶ Adopting Cinque's (1999) view that each functional projection can only encode one semantic feature, we are led to the conclusion that each particle occupies a different head position.

constituent include the lower particle.²⁷

We have seen that some *SPs* can either be preceded by the whole interrogative clause, like in (52), or intervene between the sentence initial *wh*-item and the rest of the clause, like in (53):

- | | | | |
|------|---|--|----|
| (52) | a | Parché gnenlo, mo?
Why comes-he, mo | Pg |
| | b | Quando eli rivadi, po?
When have-they arrived, po | Pg |
| (53) | a | Parché, mo, gnenlo?
Why, mo, comes-he | Pg |
| | b | Quando, po, eli rivadi?
When, po, have-they arrived | Pg |

The examples in (53) show that the particle can be located in the left periphery, as it precedes the inflected verb which has undergone subject clitic inversion (we take subject clitic inversion to witness that (some type of) verb movement to the CP layer has applied).²⁸

Under our account the particle occupies one and the same position, the difference between (52) and (53) depending on whether it attracts to its specifier the whole clause or only the *wh*-item, stranding the clause; hence, cases like (53) are expected if we assume the analysis in (47) and have a structure like the following, where the element checking the strong feature in the specifier of the *SP* is not the entire clause but the *wh*-item:

- (54) $[_{FP} wh_i [_{F^o} particle] [_{Int-ForceP} t_i [_{IP} \dots t_i \dots]]]$

We propose that the difference between particles that allow for this possibility and the ones that do not should be linked to the semantic feature the particle marks, as discussed in detail in section 3.²⁹ As for the obligatoriness of right emargination in interrogative clauses, we assume that these cases should be treated along the lines of Kayne & Pollock (2001) and Munaro, Poletto & Pollock (2001), where it is proposed that these cases are to be analyzed as left dislocation of the prosodically emarginated constituent to the specifier of a Topic projection, followed by remnant movement of the whole clause; according to our analysis, despite appearance, the constituents occurring after the

²⁷ Under either analysis it is possible to account for the ungrammaticality of the following sequences:

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| (i) | a | *Quando eli rivadi, ti, po? |
| | b | ??Po, quando eli rivadi, ti? |
| | c | ??Quando po éli rivadi ti?
[Po] when [po] have-they arrived [po/ti] [ti/po] |

Under the first analysis the ungrammaticality of (ia) may be traced back to the fact that *ti* requires its specifier position to be filled by the whole complement (including the particle *po*); on the other hand, the deviance of (ib/c) suggests that the raising of the whole clause to the specifier of *ti* requires previous movement of the clause (and not only of the *wh*-item) to the specifier of *po*, a condition which is virtually identical to the well known general restriction on successive cyclic movement according to which intermediate positions of the same type cannot be crossed over. On the other hand, the second analysis correctly predicts the ungrammaticality of (ia), where the particles are in the reverse order, as well as the deviance of (ib), where the specifier of *po* remains empty, and of (ic), where the *wh*-item has been extracted from a left branch. We will leave open here the question about the factors triggering the raising of the clause.

²⁸ If we took (52) as the basic sequence, in view of (53) we would have to posit that the particle can either be generated in two different positions, belonging to very different sentence domains, or be generated very low in the structure and subsequently moved to the CP area for some reason to be determined. This hypothesis is not plausible, given that *SPs* do not encode any aspectual feature.

²⁹ A further argument in favour of our analysis is provided by the empirical generalization formulated above: those particles that can intervene between the *wh*-item and the rest of the clause may also occur with the *wh*-item in isolation; this fact follows straightforwardly from the analysis proposed here, while it would remain unaccounted for if we admitted that *SPs* are located in the low IP area. We assume that the restriction requiring filling the specifier of the head occupied by the particle follows from some feature checking requirement which makes these particles very similar to the functional prepositions discussed in Kayne (2002).

particle are left dislocated to a specifier position lower than the one occupied by the particle itself. There is indeed an empirical argument in favour of the idea that in the cases under examination what looks like an emargination to the right is in fact analyzable as left dislocation followed by clausal movement; as noted by Benincà (1988), a right dislocated constituent can be preceded by a focalized XP, which is prosodically tied to the verbal complex; this does not hold for the kind of constructions we are examining here, as witnessed by the contrasts in (55) and (56):

- (55) a *Vèrzila mo SUBITO, sta finestra Ve
 b Vèrzila mo, subito, sta finestra
 Open-it [mo] soon [mo] this window
- (56) a *L'ātu vist mo IERI, to papà? Pg
 b L'ātu vist mo, ieri, to papà?
 Him-have-you seen [mo] yesterday [mo] your father

Interestingly, in (55b) and (56b) the adverb cannot be focalized, which shows that the object must have undergone left dislocation at some stage of the derivation.

6. Summary

In this article we have analyzed the syntactic and semantic behaviour of some sentential particles attested in the Veneto dialects.

The particles we have considered share some interesting properties: they are associated to specific clause types, they can only appear in matrix clauses, they can all occur in sentence-final position and display the typical properties of X° -elements. Our hypothesis that each particle occupies a different head position within the CP layer is crucially supported by the possibility of combining two particles; however, their precise ordering and a precise characterization of the single projections they mark remains to be determined.

We have proposed a syntactic analysis exploiting movement of the *wh*-item or of the whole clausal complement to the specifier of the projection whose head is occupied by the particle. The interpretation triggered by the presence of the particle changes depending on whether the constituent which targets the specifier of the *SP* is the *wh*-item or the whole clause. We have suggested that the raising of the whole clausal complement is induced by the necessity for some projection of the inflectional field (typically Tense or Mood) to enter a local structural relation with the particle; when this obtains Tense or Mood also contribute to the interpretation of the clause, which becomes a function of the semantic import of the particle combined with the interpretive contribution of the relevant projection. Each particle is sensitive to tense and modality features in a different way, an issue which deserves further investigation.

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