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Mapping the Syntacticisation of Discourse: The case of Sentential Particles

Pierre Larrivé & Cecilia Poletto

Université de Caen & Goethe Universität Frankfurt/Università degli Studi di Padova

0. Abstract

This article revisits the issue of how independent items become Sentential Particles (SP). Sentential Particles are a subclass of Discourse Markers (DM) that relate to typical properties of speech acts (veridicality, source of information, commitment, expectedness, information status). DM from French, English and Italo and Rhaeto-Romance are compared and contrasted in order to assess their differential behaviour and identify the steps along the path of SP syntacticization. The criteria identified to define these steps comprise relation of markers to literal interpretation, sensitivity to speech act types and main clause environments, positional variability, complementary distribution and obligatoriness. It is proposed that an opaque interpretation, complementary distributions with other sentential markers and obligatoriness constitute the successive steps towards full syntacticisation. More generally, this work shows that syntacticisation involves syntax and pragmatics proceeding in a parallel fashion in the progressive fixation in position and pragmatic contribution of the SP.

1. Introduction

Discourse Markers have been the object of considerable interest in the last decades (i.a. Schiffrin 1988, Jucker et Ziv 1988, Fraser 1999, Blakemore 2002, Dostie 2004, Fisher 2006, Degand et al 2013). Discourse Markers is the umbrella term for the (uses of) items that communicate the relation between the speakers, or between the speakers and the clause; different morpho-syntactic categories are concerned such as Sentential Particles (*She indeed completed the programme*), sentential adverbials (*He has won, hopefully*), interjections (*Wow, you're on time!*), and discourse management elements (*Uh huh*), to the exclusion of connectives that have to do with relations between clauses. They raise a number of conceptual issues, regarding their interpretation, their syntactic status, and the general processes of their evolution. This can be illustrated by reference to Sentential Particles (SP), a subset of Discourse Markers that take the morphosyntactic form of particles, that can entertain a close syntactic dependence to a clause, and whose interpretation is often described as ineffable. In the following, the SPs intuitively comment on the relation between the speech act and the hearer.

- (1) Sit down then.
- (2) Asseyez-vous done!
 Sit 2SP DM
 Please sit down.
- (3) Sentete do *(mo)! (Rhaeto-Romance; Poletto and Zanuttini, (51a))
 sit down SP
 “Sit down!”

The exact nature of their interpretation and of their syntactic role is unclear. There is an ongoing debate about how SP arise diachronically, whether the process is one of grammaticalization or of pragmaticalisation (Traugott 1995, Hansen and Rossari 2005), and whether these two processes are related (Dostie 2004, Badiou-Montferran and Buchi 2012). Under a grammaticalization interpretation, a lexical item like English *then* ‘at that time’ that has acquired a grammatical consequence reading equivalent to ‘therefore’ has further developed the ‘invitation’ value in (1). What elements or meaning are lost from the ‘time’/‘consequence’ to the ‘invitation’ reading, and whether these are related to specific syntactic positions (initial in temporal (*And Then sit down*) and final in invitation *Sit down then*) are questions that are still

to be resolved for this SP and SPs in general. A related question is whether the process must involve a progressive phonological erosion of the lexical material of the element undergoing the process. No evidence of erosion was found for the Rhaeto-Romance SP *mo*, which is phonologically identical to the adverb *mo* meaning 'now' of the Southern Italian dialects. Whether it is comparable to grammaticalization or not, the process should also allow for SPs to become full syntactic markers as with compulsory *mo* in (3) as compared to optional *donc*.

The purpose of this paper is to propose a novel perspective on the diachronic process of evolution of SPs. While case studies are provided in the literature, they are up against issues of documentation: SPs are found in interactional language, which is represented in a particular subset of written historical material, which do not necessarily present a reliable picture of actual usage. These documentation issues may reduce the ability to assess the diachronic interpretation of items and the range of their syntactic behaviour. That is why we are using a comparative methodology contrasting SPs in some contemporary language varieties. It rests on the standard uniformitarian principle (Labov 1994: 21): the same pathways and driving forces structure synchronic and diachronic variation. Our proposal is that SP develop from a process of syntacticization (Haegeman and Hill 2013) by which the interpretation and syntax of markers becomes increasingly fixated (Abraham 1991) to reflect typical interpretative and formal properties of speech acts. This process does not involve loss of lexical value *per se* as in grammaticalization, but rather the alignment to abstract typical speech act properties and the associated syntactic projections. Therefore, one objective is to identify (some of) these typical speech act properties. Another is to develop diagnostics of increasing degrees of syntacticisation. The diagnostics that we test are the following ones: a) the opacity of the interpretation with respect to other interpretations of the item, b) the degree of positional variability, c) the sensitivity to main and subordinate clause type, d) the complementary distribution with other sentential markers such as negation, and the e) degree of obligatoriness. These criteria once measured against the data will in turn help identify the critical steps of the evolution process.

The paper is organised as follows. In the first section, we consider the typical properties of speech acts by contrasting the interpretation of some interrogatives, imperatives, exclamatives and declaratives. A number of case studies follows that establish how markers that relate to these fare in interpretative and formal terms. The conclusion summarises findings and spells-out the significance of a syntacticization process of SPs for the understanding of language change.

2. A pragmatic framework for Sentential Particles

Discourse markers in general, and Sentential Particles in particular, are typically ineffable. When asked, speakers find it difficult to provide a definition to markers such as *look*, *indeed*, or *obviously* as used in the following.

- (4) Look, she's the person in charge.
- (5) She's indeed the person in charge.
- (6) She's obviously the person in charge.

There is therefore a need to consider the typical notions that items intuitively belonging to the class of Sentential Particles recurrently communicate. Such notions are considered in this section, that proceeds to illustrate them by reference to cross-linguistically stable variation in the instantiations of the three speech act types of assertion, exclamation and interrogatives. The reason for this illustration choice is that the notions necessary to define sentence types appear to be those communicated by Sentential Particles (Heim et Wiltschko 2017, Wiltschko *et al.* 2016, Zeevat 2000). While we have relied on a wide range of different theories, approaches and

studies, only some central references will be cited here, and no exhaustive review of the field will be attempted, as this is clearly beyond the scope of this work (see Gosselin 2010 for such an attempt).

Of the five notions that seem necessary to contrast and compare Sentential Particles and sentence types, one is veridicality. Veridicality is the property by which the proposition expressed by a sentence is actualised or not (Giannakidou 2015). A positive assertive in the episodic perfective past or a positive exclamative are typically actualised and therefore veridical, whereas negative assertives or interrogatives are typically not.

- (7) I was there yesterday.
- (8) You're there!
- (9) If Paula calls, I'm not here.
- (10) Hello, are you there?

Typical linguistic reflexes of (non-)veridicality comprise the Romance and Slavic subjunctive, and polarity items.

Whether it be actualised or not, the proposition has a source. The source of a proposition is the entity that relays it (on this, see the work by Oswald Ducrot and followers, Goffman's notion of Footing, and the Appraisal framework developed by White, e.g. White 2015). The entity in question is generally the speaker of the speech act. This is the case of the examples cited so far in this section. This is so obvious as to bear the question of whether it need be mentioned at all. The reason why it does is the existence of other configurations. One subtype is for the speaker to present information as being the result of an inferential process as in (6) above and the illustrations below, relating to evidentiality (Aikhenvald 2004):

- (11) Evidently, he's at home(. A green Prius is parked in front of the house).
- (12) He must be at home(. The lights are on).

The information can also be presented as coming from another speaker, as in citational sequences (13):

- (13) You say "I'm here for you", but I wonder if you really are.
- (14) Whether he's here? Let me check.

or through indirect speech reformulations:

- (15) You're apparently there for me, but are you really?
- (16) Paul asks me to tell you that he's not here.

Sentential information can have collective sources, as with proverbs, clichés and various institutional utterances the creation of which cannot be attributed to a single individual.

- (17) Time heals all things.
- (18) It's just one of those things.
- (19) I have packed these bags myself. (On an airport form)
- (20) I believe in one God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. (Christian creed)

Reportative basque *omen* (Korta and Zubeldia 2014) and Japanese quotative *-tte* (Hirose and Nawatab 2016) illustrate sources other than the speaker, and the grammatical system of e.g. Turkish and Inuktitut morphologically mark inferred propositions.

One reason why the source of information matters is that it can impact on the commitment with respect to the information (i.a. Gunlogson 2008). Commitment is the stance of the speaker with respect to the proposition that she is uttering, and whether she believes it to be the case, is neutral with respect to it, or distances herself from it. The default case for positive assertive and most exclamatives is for the speaker to be committed to the sentential information when she is the source of it (Nølke 2017). Thus, Moore's paradox below leads to incoherence because the same speaker both commits to the veridical assertion that she is the source of and then distances herself from it (Krifka 2017).

(21) ?? Paul is here, but I don't believe it.

Such a configuration is however perfectly acceptable when the source of the first proposition is a speaker other than the one expressing doubt:

(22) You claim that Paul is not here, but I don't believe it.

(23) Apparently, Paul is not here, but I don't believe it.

No commitment is generally expressed in ordinary information-seeking interrogatives,

(24) Does it rain a lot in Normandy?

although commitment from the speaker is found in biased questions.

(25) Doesn't it snow a lot in the Dolomites?

The commitment of the speaker to the underlying proposition of the inverse polarity allows the interlocutor to object with "That's not true", as with simple assertives, and unlike with ordinary interrogatives.

(26) - Doesn't it snow a lot in the Dolomites?

- That's not true!

(27) - Does it rain a lot in Normandy?

- ? That's not true!

This suggests that commitment is central for the understanding of biased questions (e.g. Farkas and Bruce 2010; see also Hansen 2017). That is, the presupposed polarity of answers thus asymmetrically depends on commitment.

The commitment and source of information are about the relationship between a proposition and its speaker. The information status of a proposition concerns its accessibility to the hearer. Accessibility defines the given, discourse-old status of (part of) a proposition. It can be achieved explicitly by (part of) a proposition having been used in so many words in the antecedent context, with echo questions such as *Paul asked you to tell me what? And Whether he's here?* Another way to achieve discourse-old status is through accommodating constructions and inferential relations, as with biased questions (for criteria and illustrations, see Larrivé 2012 and references therein). Discourse-new status is that of a (part of a) proposition that is not accessible to the hearer at that point in discourse. Informational status is encoded by various marked negative and interrogative configurations in languages of the world (e.g. Blaxter and Willis 2017 and references therein for negatives).

One more notional category is regularly communicated by some clause types and Sentential Particles is expectedness. This is illustrated by propositional high degree (as in

exclamatives), aspectual suddenness (as in miratives, DeLancey 2001), and emphasis (evoked by a host of Discourse Markers in e.g. German). The reason not to have these depend from a simple notion of degree is provided by Merin and Nikolaeva (2008) who have demonstrated that whereas from unexpectedness one can derive degree effects for exclamatives (*This is good!*, implying *very good* rather than *just about good*), degree cannot derive unexpectedness, and high degree does not characterize all exclamatives (as in *Paul is gone!*). Because such factors combine with both discourse-new and discourse-old propositions, it cannot be a subcategory of discourse status.

From that perspective, the principal purpose of Sentential Particles is to assess a proposition in relation to reality (veridicality), its speaker (source of information, commitment, expectedness) and its hearer (information status). Sentential Particles spell out typical properties of the structural and interpretative constitution of speech acts. The proposed properties are a response to the methodological issue of the intuitive ineffability of Sentential particles. The proposal would be invalidated if it were found that in some languages, some of the dimensions were never expressed by particles patently relating to the speech act, or if other dimensions were systematically relevant.

One important question that arises is the way in which these notions relate to the syntactic organisation of the sentence. Since Rizzi (1997) Split CP hypothesis, there has been an increasing movement to integrate to the left periphery of sentential structure recurrent notional properties of clauses. Embedding notions of veridicality, source of information, commitment, information status and expectedness in the syntactic structure is justified by the general issue of establishing the syntactic role and positional restrictions of overt items that communicate them, and of covertly licensing the interpretation of propositions with no overt reflexes. As with syntactic organisation, asymmetries are observed between notional properties, such that commitment is dependent on source of information, for instance, as are the asymmetrical structural relations between items.

A recent proposal to integrate the typical properties of speech acts is put forward by Wiltschko et al. (2016). They suggest that speech acts could be represented in a dedicated projection above the Force projection. It would be break down into an Addressee projection and a projection encoding the Speaker's attitude (see Giorgi 2010 for a specific proposal of a SpeakerP dominating the whole sentence structure). It may be that the projection relating to the Speaker's attitude could host the representation of notions relating to the speaker such as source, commitment and expectedness. There have been proposals to characterise the discursive status of clauses in a higher Addressee node (Zanuttini 2008, Pescarini 2009), or via the lower projections of Topic and Focus (Martins 2016, Larrivé 2018). Veridicality has been handled via a lower projection (Haegeman and Breitbarth 2014; see also Duffield 2016). Obviously, it is a matter of considerable debate how and where these notions should be integrated into the syntactic structure, the point is that it is not only desirable but also feasible to integrate the typical notions of speech act into syntactic organisation. To do so might help explain why Sentential Particles tend to occur at the periphery of a clause, and why they are particularly sensitive to the type of the speech act that they relate to, since they represent the very properties that define speech act types. Assertives, interrogatives and exclamative can be compared and contrasted with respect to veridicality, commitment and expectedness. The following sections proceed to case studies in order to assess the level of syntactic integration of Sentential Particles.

3. Case study 1 – French and English consequence DM

Several languages have Sentential Particles (Haegeman and Hill 2013). The question might be raised as to whether there are candidates to SP status in well-described languages such as English and French. Starting with French, let us consider the list of the 20 most frequent discourse markers provided by Chanet (2004: 14-16), that is, in order of frequency, *mais*, *donc*,

alors, bon, là, bien, parce que, quoi, ben, puis, enfin, aussi, voilà, après, quand même, en fait, par exemple, c'est-à-dire, puisque, surtout. Most are connectives that do not principally profile the expected contributions. Such a contribution is however found with consequential connective *donc* ‘then’ in some of its uses. In about 10% of attested uses (35 out of the first 300 occurrences in vernacular French ESLO2 corpus), *donc* is found without the antecedent clause that would support the explicit consequence reading. This is the case in total and partial interrogatives,

- (28) a. Êtes- vous donc musicien?
Be-PR-2P 2P-NOM DM musician?
Are you a musician then?
- b. comment s'appelle-t- il donc ? (ESLO2)¹
How REFL-call-PR-3S 3S-NOM DM
What's his name again?

imperatives,

- (29) ben passe donc à la maison quoi euh (ESLO2)
Well come-PR-2S DM at home like er
Do drop by at home sometime like

and partial and total exclamatives.

- (30) a. Elle est donc jolie !
3SF-NOM be-PR-3S DM pretty
- b. Comment donc qu' elle est jolie !
How DM that 3SF-NOM be-PR-3S pretty
You bet that she's pretty!

In these contexts, unlike in assertives, a DM reading is found. There is nuance of insistence in total interrogative, and in total exclamative, and of insistent invitation in the total imperative, that suggest a discourse-old value. This discourse-old information value is found in the partial interrogative (28b) – that calls for an answer that has been provided before, as *again* would suggest in *How is it again?* – and the partial exclamative (30b) – that evokes agreement to a previously asserted proposition.

In both contexts, the DM is a main-clause phenomenon (MCP)²

- (31) a. A-t-il déclaré qu' il était (?? donc) musicien ?
Have-PR-3S 3S-NOM declare-PRT that 3S-NOM be-PA-3S DM
musician
Has he said that he is a musician?
- b. Comment soupçonnes-tu qu' il s'appelle (* donc) ?
How suspect-PR-3S 2SG that 3S-NOM REF3S-called-PR-3S DM
What do you think his name is?
- (32) a. Dites- lui qu' il passe (* donc) à la maison.

¹ A SP with the same value is reported in Del Gobbo *et alii* (2015) for Bellunese, a Northern Italian variety. Bellunese *po* has exactly the same property of adjoining to a *wh*-item.

² Some authors have put into question the fact that SPs are a MCP; for instance, Coniglio (2011) shows that German sentential particles are found in non-MCP contexts. More work is needed on MCP and non-MCP DMs and SPs.

- Tell-PR-2P 3P-DAT that 3S drop-SUBJ-PR-3G DM at the home
Tell him to drop by sometime.
- b. Comment qu' elle est (?* donc) jolie !
How SP that 3S-FEM-NOM be-PR-3S DM pretty
You bet that she's pretty!

It displays some positional variation. It can be adjoined to the *wh*:

- (33) a. Comment donc qu'il s'appelle ?
What's his name again?
- b. Comment donc qu' elle est jolie !
How DM that 3SFem be-PR-3S pretty
You bet that she's pretty!

although it is generally in a medial position in the verbal complex, below the inflected verb, but before Neg2 and complements.

- (34) L' auriez- vous donc fait ?
3S-ACC have-COND-2P 2P-NOM DM done-PRT
Would you have done it then?
- (35) Fais-le donc pas. (Quebec French)
Do-IMP-2PS- SS-ACC DM not.
Don't do it then.

It is however not found in peripheral position, where *donc* only has its connective reading.

- (36) (* Donc) Passe (donc) à la maison (* donc) (under DM reading)
(DM) come-PR-2S (DM) at home (DM)
Do drop by at home sometime

The restricted position of *donc* might be taken as an indication that an autonomous Sentential Particle use is emerging as part of the grammatical system of French. However, if there were such an autonomous SP use, it should enter into competition with other SPs with opposite value. This should exclude joint use with another SP expressing a comparable discourse-old value. Looking at such SPs like *bien* with the confirmation reading of *indeed*, no such exclusion with DM *donc* can be observed, as shown by joint uses in the standard French and Quebec French examples below.

- (37) Voulez- vous donc bien cesser de m' importuner ?!
Want-PR-2P 2P-NOM MD indeed stop to 1S-ACC bother
Will you stop bothering me?
- (38) Veux- tu don(c) ben pas m' achaler !
Want-PR-2S 2S-NOM MD indeed not 1S-ACC bother
Will you stop bothering me?

These illustrations suggest that because it cooccurs with SP *b(i)en* 'indeed', *donc* is not a fully syntacticised SP.

The interpretative contribution of *donc* in those seems to differ from the ordinary expression of consequence in its connective uses. A proposed characterisation of the difference is made by Vlemings (2003). He criticises the hypothesis by Hansen (1997) that *donc* in all its

uses expresses only mutual manifestedness as being rather vague. He claims that *donc* is a consequence marker, but that in its DM use, due to the absence of an antecedent clause, an antecedent is inferred from the speech situation.

donc establishes an inferential link between the propositional content of the utterance it is part of ... and the extralinguistic situation evoking a kind of general deontic rule that the hearer should obviously obey. (Vlemings 2003: 1110)

Comparing the imperative *Tais-toi* ‘Shut up’ with and without *donc*, he proposes that;

Both ‘Tais-toi’ and ‘Tais-toi *donc*’ can be used in the same situation, such as the theater context ... on a purely intuitive basis, the main difference between the utterance with *donc* and the one without DM would be that in the latter case, the directive merely expresses the fact that the speaker wants the hearer to be quiet, whereas in the former, *donc* connects the propositional content of its host utterance (‘to shut up’) with a³ ‘deontic’ rule (‘you should shut up’), inferred from the context (‘given the present situation’)⁴ by the speaker (Vlemings 2003: 1104)

Therefore, the DM reading is in close relation to the literal interpretation of the connective. It suggests that the speech act that it applies to results from an implicit antecedent, that is inferred from the context (Vlemings 2003: 1097; see also Badiou-Montferran and Rossari 2017). This yields discourse-old inferences. There is some sensitivity to speech act types (infelicity in assertives) and main clause (MCP), its position is relatively fixed, but no complementary distribution or obligatoriness is found.

A similar situation is found with English consequence connective *then* (Aijmer 2015, Haselow 2011). Like *donc*, *then* is comparatively rare with the target DM reading typically arising in imperatives. 237 of the first 300 occurrences in the Spoken material of the British National Corpus (available on the Brigham Young University website) have a temporal and a consequence reading, that can be respectively paraphrased by *at the moment* and *as a consequence*. 28 occurrences relate to the DM use of *then* in interrogatives. In the following, a question arises following a discussion of the earnings of the speaker as a young man.

- (39) – How much was you’re a-- father earning at this time?
 – Oh about seven and six a shift.
 – So I mean.
 – That was top price.
 – Before you started work were the family fairly poorly off then?

These present an expression of consequence. It is not internal to the speech-turn itself, but is inferred from the preceding context. This contributes to relate the question to the antecedent discourse, and mitigate its out-of-the-blue character, which is odd otherwise:

- (40) – How much was your a father earning at this time?
 – Oh about seven and six a shift. That was top price.

³ A similar value is expressed by the quantificational expression *un po* ‘a bit’ in colloquial standard Italian in cases like (i):

- (i) Ma sta un po’ zitto!
 But stay a bit quiet!
 ‘Do be quiet!’

⁴ “Inferred from the context” makes Vlemings’ approach very similar to the notion of “mutual manifestedness” that the author criticises Hansen for.

– ? Was the family fairly poorly off?

While use in exclamatives seems implausible,

(41) She's so pretty (* then)!

imperatives are attested (10 occurrences).

(42) – I don't want peas.
– Don't you?
– Well, eat up (pause) eat up the broccoli then.

The imperative with DM *then* is uttered for the benefit of the hearer⁵, as it does in fixed phrase *Go on then*, but this is not always the case.

(43) a. – Come and stand on my feet like we do. (pause) Come on. Come and stand on my feet (pause) and we walk round.
– Oh, why?
– (laugh) Come on then.
– (crying)
– Well let's show Tracy. Let's show Tracy. Stand on my feet. Come on then.
b. Where you gone? Come on you can roll over, here are, come on you can roll over (pause) you gon na sit up? Sit up then, you sit up? Go on then sit up.

Other contexts include use with simple assertives (5 occurrences),

(44) I'm gonna have to start flogging some of the stuff off to get some money back then.

and in conjunction with discourse markers (*Well then* (5), *Okay then* (5), *Allright then* (7), *yes then* (1), *tara then* (1), *bye then* (1)).

With each speech act type, the DM seems to be a MCP.⁶ But this is difficult to assess due to the position of *then*. Unlike *donc*, DM *then* is clause final; the clause-initial position seems unavailable as it is occupied by the ordinary consequence connective (or temporal marker). Sentence-internal uses are found with *whs*.

(45) a. If Paul isn't, who then is a musician?
b. Who is a musician then?

Thus, in *Tell him to come and see us then*, it is not clear whether *then* relates to the main or to the non-finite subordinate.

No mutual exclusion with *indeed* are noted,

(46) a. If Paul isn't, who then is indeed a musician?
b. Who is indeed a musician then?
c. ? Play it indeed then.

⁵ SPs which encode point of view of the speaker or the hearer are reported for Rhaeto-Romance by Poletto and Zanuttini (2003)., see section 5 below.

⁶ Some MCP embeddings are allowed with bridge verbs (Haegeman 2006 and references therein), as in *I think that you shouldn't worry about it then*.

- d. Indeed, don't worry about it then.

to suggest that like *donc*, *then* is not a fully syntacticised SP. Unlike *donc* however, *indeed* in clause internal position is difficult to use with *then*, as suggested by the slight oddity of (c) (although note that DPs such as e.g. *A close call indeed then* is attested)

DM *then* closely relates to its literal consequence reading, and evokes that the speech act is an effect of the antecedent exchange. It is sensitive to speech act (with no use in exclamatives), to main clause (as a MCP), clause-final position, although as with *donc*, there is no complementary distribution or obligatoriness.

The conclusion that follows is that despite similarities, neither *donc* nor *then* are actually Sentential Particles. Their interpretation as DM is transparently connected to the consequence reading, and the antecedent is inferred rather than explicitly provided. We therefore are still dealing with expressions of consequence, rather than the default spell-out of a Discourse-status projection. The same conclusion can be reached on the basis of formal behaviour. Restrictions are observed, but they vary between the two markers (no use in assertive and exclamatives respectively; clause-medial versus clause final positions, adjunction to a *wh*), and there is no complementary distribution or obligatoriness that would suggest relation to a fixed projection.

The following section presents three more case studies. They further test the criteria of interpretation, sensitivity to speech act type, restriction to main clauses, position, competition with other SP candidates and obligatory presence. The objective remains to establish steps along the syntacticisation process of SP.

4. Case Study 2: Venetian *ciò*

In this section, we look at one DM in the Venetian variety of ItaloRomance. A number of markers in that variety have been described (*i.a.* Munaro and Poletto 2002, 2008).

- (47) Dove valo, tì?
Where go-PR-3S DM
Where on earth is he going?
- (48) Quando eli rivadi, po?
When have-PR-3S arrived, DM
When have they arrived then?
- (49) Quando rivaràli, mo?
When arrive-FUT-3P DM
When will they finally arrive?

Some are of pronominal in origins (*ti* being homophonous with the second person singular tonic pronoun), some other adverbial (like *po* and *mo*), and yet some other are verbal. This is the case of *ciò*. Although its etymological origin is already completely opaque to the speakers, it derives from the second person singular imperative of the verb 'take', and the behaviour of the DM use has not been considered (but see Penello and Chinellato 2008 for a study on Paduan *ciò*, which has a more limited distribution). The interpretation of *ciò* is that of the pressing invitation found in *come on* as in the following that enjoins a passive spectator to help the speaker with the activity they are engaged in.

- (50) Ciò, dame na man!
DM, give-2S-1S-DAT a hand!
Come on, give me hand!

The particle occurs with all types except for declaratives.

- (51) a. (Ciò) ti te movi (, ciò)?
 (DM) 2S-NOM 2S-ACC move (DM)?
 (Listen,) would you move (, ?? come on)?
- b. (Ciò) sentete (ciò)!
 (DM) sit.down (DM)
 (Come on,) Sit down (come on)!
- c. (Ciò) vien qua (ciò)!
 (DM) come-2S here (DM)
 (Come on,) Come here (, come on).
- d. (Ciò) Che beo che el ze, (cio)!
 (DM) How nice that that is, (DOM)

It is sensitive to the main versus embedded status of the clause, as it only occurs in root contexts:

- (52) a. Ciò, ti ghe ga dito de vegner?
 (DM) 2S-ACC have-1S already told-PRT to come
 Listen, did you already tell him to come?
 Look, have you already told him to come?
- b. I me ga domandá (* ciò)⁷
 3P-NOM 1S-ACC already ask-PR-3P (DM)
 They asked me DM
 se (* ciò) ti ghe ga dito de vegner
 if (DM) 2S-NOM 3-ACC have- already told-PRT to come
 I'm wondering whether you have already told him to come.

It is restricted to initial and final position, as attested by the following cases:

- (53) a. Ciò, dame na man!
 DM, give-2S-1S-DAT a hand!
 Come on, give me hand!
- b. Dame na man, ciò!
 Give me a hand, come on!
- c. *Dame ciò na man!
 Give me (* come on) a hand!

Munaro and Poletto (2002, 2008) treat sentence final DMs by assuming that the DM is nevertheless in the left periphery of the clause and becomes sentence final because it can attract the whole clause to its specifier. In this case, the attraction of the clausal complement of the DM would be optional, since the DM can very well occur at the beginning of the clause.

The DM is not in complementary distribution with any other similar marker, be it adverbs, or vocatives which are the most plausible alternant of the DM, since it seems to have a vocative flavor:

- (54) (Ciò,) Toni, cossa ti ghe ga dito (ciò)?

⁷ In (52b) the DM cannot be interpreted in the main clause, since it is a declarative, nor with the embedded clauses, since this DM obeys the MCP restriction. If the main clause is turned into an interrogative, the sentence is possible in the interpretation of the DM referring to the main clause.

(Come on,) Toni, you, what you him have told (Come on)?
Come on, Toni, what did you tell him?

The only restriction is that as shown above, the DM is sentential initial position is found before the vocative.

We note finally that the DM is not obligatory in any of the contexts above. There is simply a tendency to use it in contexts in which the speaker is trying to draw the attention of the addressee, but there is no need to utter the DM in any of the contexts mentioned in order for the clause to be grammatical, as indicated by the brackets in all examples.

We conclude that *ciò* represents an early stage in the process of syntacticisation. While its reading is not tied to one typical property of speech acts, formal restrictions are observed in its main-clause use, the incompatibility with assertive, and its position with respect to vocative elements. Before moving on to Rhaeto-Romance that has fully integrated some of these particles into the grammatical system, we examine a case from French that seems to represent an intermediate stage in the syntacticisation of SP.

4. Case Study 3: Back to French

The previous case studies explored markers that concern properties of speech acts in a tangential way. By contrast, one such property is directly communicated by one DM in French. Unlike *bien* on its own which can be ambiguous between different readings, the slightly archaic phrase *bel et bien* ‘well and good’ is unambiguously communicating a biased commitment that contrary to expectations, a proposition is the case.

- (55) (Une habitante de Condat-sur-Vienne, près de Limoges, a découvert qu'elle était déclarée morte)
alors qu' *elle* est bel et bien vivante. (Google)
while that 3SF be-PR-3S DM alive
(An inhabitant of Condat-sur-Vienne, near Limoges, discovered that she had been declared dead) when she is indeed alive

The marker is moderately sensitive to speech acts. While being found mostly in assertives as above, it seems possible in total and partial questions.

- (56) Leur rupture est-elle bel et bien définitive ? (On dirait en tout cas !) (Google)
Their breaking-up be-PR-3S 3SF DM final?
Is their breaking-up indeed for good?
(57) Et qui c'est qui est bel et bien vivant ? (Google)
And who 3S be-PR-3S who be-PR-3S DM alive
And who is it who is indeed alive?

Felicitous use seems possible, although rare, in imperatives,

- (58) Et faites bel et bien ce bilan
(avant de poursuivre votre Plan d'AutoFormation.) (Google)
And make-PR-2S DM that assessment
And do the assessment training (before carrying on with your self-training plan).

but not in exclamatives.

- (59) a. ?? Elle est bel et bien jolie !

- b. 3SF-NOM be-PR-3S DM pretty
 Comme elle est (* bel et bien) jolie !
 How 3SF-NOM be-PR-3S DM pretty
 She's indeed pretty!

As evidenced by the initial illustration in (55) and by those below, *bel et bien* is acceptable in subordinate clauses, beyond bridge verbs.

- (60) a. Les onze chefs (...) assurent qu' il est bel et bien vivant.
 The eleven chiefs declare-PR-3P that 3PS-NOM be-PR-3S DM alive
 The eleven chiefs declare that he is indeed alive
 b. Si elle est bel et bien intégrée au projet de loi ...,
 If 3FS-NOM is DM integrated to the project of law
 If it is indeed built in the law project ...

Restrictions bear upon its position however, being exclusively sentence medial, like DM *donc*

- (61) (*Bel et bien) Il est (bel et bien) parti (?* bel et bien).
 (DM) 3S-NOM be-PR-3S (DM) go-PRT (DM)
 He is indeed gone.

In this medial position, it enters into competition with negation,

- (62) ? Il ne travaille bel et bien pas.
 3S-NOM NEG1 work-PR-3S DM NEG2
 He indeed doesn't work.

and the infelicity increases with *bien*, which has a wide network of readings (Dostie 2004) that include those associated with *bel et bien* :

- (63) ?? Il ne travaille bien pas.
 3S-NOM NEG1 work-PR-3S DM NEG2

Similar competition is observed with *peut-être* 'maybe'

- (64) a. * Il travaille bel et bien peut-être.
 3S-NOM work-PR-3S DM maybe
 He indeed maybe does work.
 b. Il travaille peut-être bel et bien.
 3S-NOM work-PR-3S maybe DM
 He indeed maybe does work.

No element of obligatoriness is noted however.

Thus, the phrase *bel et bien* apparently represents an intermediate stage of syntacticisation. While its sensitivity to speech act types and MCP is less constrained than with *ciò*, its interpretation and positions are more fixed, and elements of competition with other sentential markers are observed. We move on to cases of optimal SP development from a variety of Rhaeto-Romance.

5. Case study 4: Rhaeto-Romance

We have seen so far that comparing DMs from different languages help identify different degrees of syntactic integration, and identify characteristic steps in the process.

Varieties of Rhaeto-Romance display particles that communicate well-defined pragmatic properties. On an intuitive approach, Sentential Particle *pa* draws attention to a proposition, in the way that *ciò* does (Del Gobbo, Munaro and Poletto 2014).

- (65) Al ploi pa.
 3S-NOMIt rain-PT-3S SP
 ‘Look it’s raining’

From the work done on these particles, it emerges clearly that they are not sensitive to speech act type, since they are not the sort of typing particle that Cheng (2001) postulates for languages like Chinese. To continue on *pa*, it is found in interrogatives, imperatives, and exclamatives.

- (66) a. Vast *pa* a Venezia?
 Go-2S SP to Venice?
 Are you going to Venice?
- b. Ulà a- i *pa* ody Giani, l’ultimo ja:d?
 where have-PR-3SG 3P-NOM-CL SP see-PRT John, the last time
 Where did they see John last time?
- c. Faa-l *pa*. (S. Leonardo di Badia)
 Do 3S-ACC SP
 ‘Do it!’
- d. Al è (*pa*) gny inier!
 SCL is (SP) come yesterday
 He came yesterday!
- e. Ci bel c al è (*pa*) da jii a spazir soe par munt!
 how nice that SCL is (SP) of to-go t o walk on around mountains
 How nice it is to go walking in the mountains!

Pa is sensitive to the main versus embedded status of the clause. It can occur both in main (as above), and in embedded declaratives selected by bridge verbs, which notably display MCP (notice that this Rhaeto-Romance variety is still V2):

- (67) Al m a dit
 3S-NOM-CL 1S-ACC have-PR-3S say-PRT
 c al n ee *pa* nia bel.
 that 3S-NOM-CL NEG1 was SP NEG2 nice
 He told me that it wasn’t nice.

but not in embedded interrogatives.

- (68) *A i m a domané s al n fus *pa* bel.
 SCL SCL me asked if 3S-NOM-CL NEG was SP nice
 He asked me whether it was nice.

In the V2 Rhaeto-Romance varieties we observe a set of DM that have a fixed medial syntactic position, which is immediately after the inflected verb but before the past participle (69) and cannot be interrupted by either modal (70), (71), temporal (72) or aspectual adverbs (73):

- (69) a. Al è (*pa*) gny inier.
SCL is pa come yesterday
'He came yesterday.'
- b. *Al è gny *pa* inier
- c. *Al è gny inier *pa*
- (70) a. Al a *d sigy* mangé.
SCL have of sure eaten
'He ate for sure.'
- b. Al a *pa d sigy* mangé.
SCL have pa of sure eaten
- c. *Al a *d sigy pa* mangé.
SCL has of sure pa eaten
- (71) a. Al a *magari* bel mangé.
SCL has perhaps already eaten
'Perhaps he has already eaten.'
- b. Al a *pa magari* bel mangé.
SCL has pa perhaps already eaten
- c. *Al a *magari pa* bel mangé
- d. *Al a *magari bel pa* mangé
- (72) a. Al vagn *duman*.
SCL comes tomorrow
'He is coming tomorrow.'
- b. Al vagn *pa duman*.
SCL comes pa tomorrow
- c. *Al vagn *duman pa*
SCL comes tomorrow pa
- (73) a. I n a *pa nia ciamò* mangé ncoe.
SCL neg have pa neg yet eaten today
'I haven't yet eaten today.'
- b. *I n a *ciamò pa nia* mangé ncoe
SCL neg have yet pa neg eaten today

Thus, the position of the particle must be rather high since it occurs in front of modal adverbs like *magari* 'perhaps' and temporal adverbs like *duman* 'tomorrow'. It is clear that the particle *pa* has a fixed position immediately after the inflected verb, which has raised up to the C-domain, due to the V2 configuration.

The Sentential Particles are obligatory in one type of clauses, namely *wh* interrogatives, where it is necessary to convey the meaning of a standard question:

- (74) a. Ulà vas-t pa?
where go-SCL pa
Where are you going?
- b. %Ulà vas-t?
where go-SCL
- c. *Ulà pa tu vas?
where pa SCL go

(74a) represent a standard question, while (74b) can only be interpreted as a special question in the sense of Obenauer (2006), i.e. (74b) can only be interpreted as a rhetorical question or a

surprise/disapproval question. (74c) shows that the particle has indeed a fixed position also in interrogatives. The same happens in imperative clauses, where at least one particle is obligatory:

- (75) a. Faal *pa*!
do-it pa
Do it!
b. Faal *ma*!
c. Faal *poe*!
d. Faal *mo*!
e. * Faal!

This means that particles have grammaticalized in these varieties. The fact that it is not possible to utter an imperative clause without the presence of a particle shows that they are fully integrated into the grammar of the language. However, they do not mark sentence type but express pragmatic values, i.e. for *pa*, the confirmation against contrary expectations. The analysis that we adopt of their pragmatic value is that of Poletto and Zanuttini's (2003) who identify two dimensions. The first value is point of view, and separates *mo* and *pa*, which are uttered in favor of the speaker, and *ma* and *poe*, which are uttered in favor of the addressee. So, *Faal mo!* is an invitation to do something for the sake of the speaker, and *Faal ma!* for that of the hearer. Note that a similar grammatical distinction is found in the "versions" of the verb in Kartvelian languages, where an action can be marked as being performed for oneself (subjective version) or for another (objective), also found in Turkic, Munda, and Burushaski language families (Anderson and Gurevich 2005). The following are illustrations from Kartvelian language Svan (Tuite 1998).

- (76) a. Neutral version
dina qæn-s æ-b-em
girl:NOM bull-DAT NtV-tie-SM
'the girl ties up the bull'
(no specific orientation)
b. Subjective version
dina qæn-s i-b-em
girl:NOM bull-DAT SbV-tie-SM
'the girl ties up her own bull, ties it for herself'
(orientation toward subject)
c. Objective version
dina mu-s qæn-s x-o-b-em
girl:NOM father-DAT bull-DAT O3-ObV-tie-SM
'the girl ties up her father's bull, ties it up for him' (orientation toward indirect object)

The distinction between *ma* and *poe* has to do with the expectations of the speaker, since *poe* negates an implicature, while *ma* does not. The distinction between *mo* and *pa* is in terms of Focus: when *pa* is uttered in addition to point of view, the whole sentence is focused.

The complementary distribution of particles is clear in imperative clauses, where it is only possible to have one particle of the same type per clause:

- (77) a. Faal *pa poe*!
b. *Faal *poe pa*!
c. ?(?)Faal *pa ma*!

- d. *Faal *ma pa*!

While *pa* and *poe* are compatible, *pa* and *ma* are not. One might wonder whether this is a purely syntactic effect, i.e. it might be the case that the incompatibility depends on the fact that there is just one position for several particles, and that they are in complementary distribution because they occupy the same position. However, the fact that the two particles are incompatible might also be derived by their opposite semantic/pragmatic value.

Notice however, that the incompatibility does not hold of particles only but also of other adverbial elements, like negation. Contrary to positive imperatives (see (42e)), negative imperatives in Rhaeto-Romance need not express the particle, but display a special type of negative marker *no*, which is not found in declaratives, where the form of the post-verbal negative marker is *nia*, which is homophonous with the n-word meaning ‘nothing’ (see Poletto and Zanuttini 2004). The negative marker *no* can occur both pre- and post-verbally, when it occurs in preverbal position, the other preverbal negative marker *ne* disappears:

- (78) a. *Ne le fà no!*
neg it do neg (2nd sg)
“Don't do it!”
b. *No le fà!*
neg it do (2nd sg)
“Don't do it!”

The negative marker is compatible with some particles but not others. Note that this cannot simply be a purely syntactic effect, since this happens when the negative marker is pre-verbal as well as when it is postverbal, as shown by the fact that (79c) and (80c) are both ungrammatical:

- (79) a. *Ne le fà ma no!*
neg it do ma neg (2nd sg)
“Don't do it!”
b. *Ne le fà pa no!*
c. **Ne le fà mo no/no mo!*
(80) a. *No ma le fà!*
neg ma it do (2nd sg)
“Don't do it!”
b. *No pa le fà!*
neg pa it do (2nd sg)
“Don't do it!”
c. **No mo/Mo no le fà!*

We can conclude that in Rhaeto-Romance, particles have completely syntacticized, i.e. they represent the last stage of evolution of Sentential Particles. They are compulsory items that enter in competition with other grammatical markers, display positional restrictions and a pragmatic value that cannot be derived from a literal interpretation that is entirely opaque. The stages of syntacticisation of SP and their criteria are summarized below.

6. An implicational hierarchy

The case studies above have presented us with pragmatically-charged sentential markers. The consideration of their interpretative and formal characteristics has helped defined criteria to

identify different steps in the evolution of Sentential Particles. They are summarised in the table below.

	Interpretation	Position	Sensitivity to speech act types				MCP	Complementary distribution with other elements	Obligatoriness
			Ass	Q	Imp	Exc			
French <i>donc</i>	Relating to connective reading	Medial, except with partial interrogatives	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
English <i>then</i>	Relating to connective reading	Final, except with partial interrogatives	+	+	+	-	+	-	-
Venetian <i>ciò</i>	Opaque	Initial/final	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
French <i>bel et bien</i>	Opaque	Peripheral	+	+	+/-	-	-	+/-	-
Rhaeto-Romance <i>Ma/mo pa/poe</i>	Opaque	Medial after the inflected verb but before all adverbs.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

From the table above, we can derive some interesting considerations. First of all, there is essentially no distinction between DMs and SPs in terms of sensitivity to speech act types and main clause phenomena. With the notable exception of *bel et bien*, all these elements have a tendency to be found in main clauses (or in those embedded clauses which are known to have main clause behavior). None of these elements is similar to so-called sentence typing particles, since they can occur in different clause types and also this property is stable across DMs and SPs. Furthermore, it is possible to derive at least four steps in the development of SPs.

- The first stage is represented by French *donc* and English *then*. These DMs have an interpretation that is not limited to the abstract properties of speech acts like commitment or information status, their position is variable, they are not in complementary distribution with other elements and they are not obligatory.
- The second stage is represented by Venetian *ciò*: although the SP is not obligatory, we see that it starts to alternate with other elements. At this point, this could just be a semantic effect of incompatibility, but it shows that the meaning of the SP is becoming tied to speech act properties.
- The third stage is represented by French *bel et bien*, which is more advanced than *ciò* in terms of position, but is not yet obligatory.
- The fourth and last stage is represented by Rhaeto-Romance, where the SPs are the obligatory expression of syntactic projections and as such, their semantic/pragmatic value is fixed and their syntactic position is also fixed, since they can only occur immediately after the inflected verb but before all adverbs.

Thus, from the markers studied, Venetian *ciò* would represent the initial stage, French *bel et bien* an intermediate step and Rhaeto-Romance particles the final actualisation of the syntactisation process. While our survey cannot have the pretense of being exhaustive, it is suggestive that the obligatory presence, which means that the SP has become the morphological exponent of a given grammatical value, goes together with its “intolerance” with respect to elements that either express or probably imply the opposite value with respect to the one expressed by the DM.

As anticipated in the introduction, the variation found from DMs to SPs cannot be characterized in terms of grammaticalization, since the typical correlates like semantic loss and phonological reduction are not present. Rather, the data analysed here suggest that evolution of pragmatic markers is not a story of loss, but a story of increasing fixation, which proceeds in parallel in the pragmatic as well as in the syntactic component. This is a rather interesting result,

since it attests that language variation/change is not triggered by one component – such as phonological reduction as has so often been proposed, that then impacts onto other components –, but the process of fixation needs to evolve in a parallel way in different modules of grammar.

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