

On the diachronic origin of sentential particles in North-Eastern Italian dialects

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In this article we try to determine the diachronic origin of a few sentential particles attested in some North-Eastern Italian dialects on the basis of their syntactic properties. The particles we consider are associated with specific clause types and can only appear in matrix non-declarative clauses; they generally occur in sentence-final position, and only some of them can follow the *wh*-item in an interrogative clause. They display the typical properties of X° -elements, and can therefore be analysed as functional heads of the CP layer; we present an analysis exploiting movement of the *wh*-item or of the whole clause to the specifier corresponding to the head occupied by the particle. The different distribution that characterizes the two main types of particles seems to depend on whether they derive etymologically from pronouns or from adverbs; the new properties developed in the grammaticalization process suggest that when an element is reanalysed as a functional category, it can further acquire the value of functional projections merged close to it in the structure.

Keywords adverbs, clause typing, grammaticalization, Northern Italian dialects, particles, pronouns

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1. INTRODUCTION

By focussing on their syntactic properties, in this work we intend to shed light on the diachronic origin of a number of sentential particles (henceforth *SPs*) which can appear in some North-Eastern Italian dialects in main non-declarative clauses. Consider the interrogative sentences in (1).

- (1) a. Quando eli rivadi? Pg
b. Quando, po, eli rivadi?
c. Quando eli rivadi, po?
when [po] are-they arrived [po]
'When did they arrive?'

The example in (1a) is a canonical *wh*-question requiring an informative answer. The interpretation of the utterance undergoes a subtle change with the presence of the

particle, which can appear either immediately after the *wh*-item or sentence-finally, as in (1b) and (1c), respectively. When *po* follows the *wh*-item immediately, as in (1b), the speaker asking for the time of the arrival, also expresses a slight astonishment about the fact that the event has taken place; sentence-final *po*, in (1c), requires additionally the speaker's reference to a preceding communicative situation that has been left suspended and is taken up again at present.

A detailed investigation of these elements turns out to be relevant both for a more detailed mapping of the left periphery of the clause and for a deeper understanding of the diachronic processes of grammaticalization and reanalysis.¹

Although the particles described here occur – with a partially different distribution – in several dialects of the North-Eastern Italian area, we will systematically compare data from two varieties, a Northern Veneto variety and an Eastern Veneto variety (Pagotto and Venetian, glossed as *Pg* and *Ve*, respectively), referring only occasionally to other dialects.

The particles we consider also share the following distributional property: they can occur in sentence-final position, which – we claim – can be derived by movement of the whole CP to the specifier position of the head occupied by the particle; however, some particles can also occur immediately after the *wh*-element, a fact that we will try to account for by looking at their diachronic origin.

While *SPs* can appear in main interrogatives, exclamatives or imperatives, they cannot occur in declarative clauses or in embedded contexts: from an interpretive point of view they always involve a presupposition in the clause which is induced either by the linguistic context or by the universe of discourse. The study of these particles turns out to have theoretical relevance for a crosslinguistic theory of clausal typing, as the distribution of *SPs* involves a number of semantic-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.²

The article is organized as follows: in section 2 we list the syntactic properties shared by all *SPs* and address the issue of the categorial status of the particles, providing some arguments in favour of the hypothesis that *SPs* are heads; in section 3 we sketch a hypothesis about the diachronic process from which these particles may have originated; in section 4 we analyse in detail the syntactic derivation exploiting clause preposing; section 5 contains a summary of the paper.

2. COMMON SYNTACTIC PROPERTIES

2.1 *Distributional properties*

As mentioned above, the *SPs* attested in the two dialects examined share the following distributional properties:³

- (2) a. *SPs* can always occur in sentence-final position;
 b. *SPs* which can also occur immediately after the *wh*-element, can cooccur with a *wh*-item in isolation;
 c. *SPs* are sensitive to the clause type: they never occur in declarative clauses;
 d. *SPs* never occur in embedded contexts.

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 only at the end of the sentence; it cannot appear either following the *wh*-item or with the *wh*-item in isolation:⁴

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

The particle *lu* can appear in the sentence-final position in exclamatives presenting the whole propositional content as new with respect to a presupposition:

- (5) a. L'à piovest, **lu**! Pg
 b. (***Lu**) l'à (***lu**) piovest!
 [lu] it has [lu] rained [lu]
 'It has rained!'

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:

- (6) a. Vien qua, **mo**! Ve
 b. ***Mo**, vien qua!
 [mo] come here [mo]
 'Come here!'
- (7) a. Ali magnà, **mo**? Pg
 b. ***Mo**, ali magnà?
 [mo] have-they eaten [mo]
 'Have they eaten?'

- (8) a. Quando rivelo, **mo**? Pg
 b. ***Mo**, quando rivelo?
 [mo] when arrives-he [mo]
 ‘When is he arriving?’

Finally, the particle *po*, which occurs in *yes-no* interrogatives, *wh*-interrogatives and imperatives, can appear sentence-finally, and in Pagotto also sentence-initially:

- (9) a. (Quando) eli partidi, **po**? Pg
 when are-they left po
 b. **Po**, (quando) eli partidi? Pg
 po when are-they left
 ‘(When) did they leave?’
- (10) a. (Dove) zeì ndai **po**? Ve
 (where) are-they gone po
 b. ***Po**, (dove) zeì ndai? Ve
 po where are-they gone
 ‘(Where) have they gone away?’
- (11) a. Va a ciorlo, **po**! Pg
 go to take-it po
 b. **Po**, va a ciorlo! Pg
 po go to take-it
 ‘Go and take it!’

Secondly, among those *SPs* that occur in *wh*-contexts, *mo* and *po* in Pagotto can also occur immediately after a *wh*-item or with a *wh*-item in isolation:

- (12) a. Quando rivaràli, **mo**? Pg
 b. Quando, **mo**, rivaràli?
 when [mo] arrive-FUT-they [mo]
 ‘When will they arrive?’
- (13) a. Che **mo**? b. Andé **mo**? Pg
 what mo where mo
 ‘What?’ ‘Where?’
- (14) a. Quando eli rivadi, **po**? Pg
 b. Quando, **po**, eli rivadi?
 when [po] are-they arrived [po]
 ‘When did they arrive?’
- (15) a. Andé **po**? b. Quando **po**? Pg
 where po when po
 ‘Where?’ ‘When?’

Thirdly, all *SPs* are sensitive to clause type: the examples reported above show that *SPs* always occur in utterances which can be classified under the interrogative, exclamative or imperative clause type and are never found in declarative clauses. In addition, these particles always convey a presuppositional entailment (a property which we will not address directly in this article).

Finally, the occurrence of *SPs* is restricted to main contexts; as shown by the following data, particles are banned from embedded clauses, independently of their clause type:

- (16) a. El me ga domandà dove (***ti**) che i ze ndai (***ti**) Ve
he-me-has asked where [ti] that they-are gone [ti]
 ‘He asked me where they have gone.’
 b. No so dirte quando (***ti**) che i é partidi (***ti**) Pg
(I) not know tell-you when [ti] that they-are left [ti]
 ‘I can’t tell you when they left.’
- (17) a. I me a domandà cossa (***mo**) che avon fat (***mo**). Pg
they-me-have asked what [mo] that (we) have done [mo]
 ‘They asked me what we have done.’
 b. No so andé (***mo**) che i é ndadi (***mo**). Pg
(I) not know where [mo] that they-are gone [mo]
 ‘I don’t know where they have gone.’
- (18) a. I me à domandà parché (***po**) che l’à parlà (***po**). Pg
they-me-have asked why [po] that he-has spoken [po]
 ‘They asked me why he has spoken.’
 b. No so dove (***po**) che el ze ndà (***po**). Ve
(I) not know where [po] that he-is gone [po]
 ‘I don’t know where he has gone.’
- (19) L’à dit (***lu**) che l’à piovest (***lu**), ieri sera (***lu**).⁵ Pg
he-has said [lu] that it-has rained [lu] yesterday evening [lu]
 ‘He said that it rained last night.’

This distributional constraint 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).⁶

In section 4 below we will try to provide a unified account for all the syntactic properties of *SPs* discussed in this section, summarized in the synoptic chart in Table 1.

2.2 Sentential particles as heads

A priori, *SPs* can be analysed either as heads or as specifiers. The head status of the *SPs* is suggested by the fact that they cannot be modified or focalized:

	Occurrence in sentence- final position	Occurrence after the <i>wh</i> -item	Yes-no/ <i>Wh</i> - interrogatives	Imperatives	Yes-no exclamatives	Embedded clauses
<i>Ti</i>	✓	*	* ✓	*	*	*
<i>Lu</i>	✓	*	*/*	*	✓	*
<i>Mo</i>	✓	✓	✓ ✓	✓	*	*
<i>Po</i>	✓	✓	✓ ✓	✓	*	*

Table 1. The properties of sentential particles: a synopsis.

- (20) a. *Cossa gali fato, proprio *ti*?! Ve
what have-they done just ti
 b. *Cossa gali fato, *TI*?! Ve
what have-they done TI
- (21) a. *L'é fret incoi, proprio **lu**! Pg
it-is cold today just lu
 b. *L'é fret incoi, **LU**! Pg
it-is cold today LU
- (22) a. *Quando riveli, proprio **mo**?! Pg
when arrive-they just mo
 b. *Quando riveli, **MO**?! Pg
when arrive-they MO
- (23) a. *Zeli partii, proprio **po**? Ve
are-they left just po
 b. *Eli partidi, **PO**? Pg
are-they left po

The ungrammaticality of (20)–(23) and the fact that *SPs* cannot be used in isolation would be completely unexpected if *SPs* were located in some specifier position.⁷

Evidence for the head status of *SPs* is also provided by their diachronic origin: two of these particles, namely *ti* and *lu*, were originally tonic pronouns, the second singular and third singular masculine forms respectively; nonetheless, they have nowadays a different distribution with respect to subject pronouns. The particle *ti* is compatible with third person subjects and can cooccur with the tonic pronominal subject *ti*:

modo ‘now’ (cf. Pellegrini 1972 and Rohlfs 1969, respectively; *mo* does in fact still retain the original temporal meaning in the Central and Southern Italian dialects).

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 (cf. Roberts & Roussou 1999).

Hence, we propose to analyse the *SPs* considered here as filling functional heads located in a layered CP field (cf. Rizzi 1997).

2.3 Sentential particles in Germanic languages

The particle *po* appearing in interrogatives seems to have counterparts in languages like English and Norwegian, as shown by the following examples:

- (28) Reiser du så?
leave you then
 ‘Do you leave, then?’
- (29) a. Har de reist, da?
have they left then
 ‘Have they left, then?’
 b. Når reiste de, da?
when left they then
 ‘When did they leave, then?’

Concerning the head status of particles, *then* and *da* can in general be modified or focused, except when tagging an interrogative:

- (30) De reiste akkurat da/DA.
they left just then/THEM
 ‘They left just then/THEM.’
- (31) a. *Har de reist, akkurat da/DA?
have they left just then/THEM
 ‘*Have they left, just then/THEM?’
 b. *Når reiste de, akkurat da/DA?
when left they just then/THEM
 ‘*When did they leave, just then/THEM?’

Notice that the impossibility of modification is shared by the related adverbial *poi* of standard Italian (though not by *allora*) and by the Norwegian particle *så*:

- (32) a. (*Proprio) poi siamo andati via.
 b. (Proprio) allora siamo andati via.
just then are gone away
 ‘Just then we went away.’

- (33) (*Akkurat) så gikk vi vår vei.
just then went we our way
 ‘Just then we went away.’

This would suggest that non-modifiability by *proprio/akkurat* might be linked to a semantic feature common to all occurrences of *så/po(i)* rather than to the status of the particle *po* as a (functional) head. However, as *poi* indicates a stretch of time, it is expected that it cannot be modified by an element like *proprio*, which evidently applies to a point in time. This is supported by the fact that other modifiers are possible; elements like *solo* ‘only’, generally analysed as focalizers, can modify *poi*:

- (34) Solo poi siamo partiti.
only then (we) are left
 ‘It was only then that we left.’

Furthermore, although elements like *da* look similar to *po* in that they cannot be modified or focused when tagging an interrogative, there are nonetheless some interesting distributional differences; while *po* cannot appear in declaratives, the occurrence of the Norwegian particle *da* is not restricted to interrogatives and can appear both in declaratives and in exclamatives:

- (35) a. De har (vel) reist, (*akkurat) da.
 ‘They have (probably) left, (*just) then.’
 b. Det var da litt av en laks, da!
 ‘That was one hell of a salmon, then!’

Unlike *po* and the other particles described here, *da* can have more than one underlying position; more precisely, it can also be sentence-initial, and when it is, it can cooccur with a second, clause-final *da*:

- (36) Da har de (vel) reist (,da).
 ‘Then have they (probably) left (,then).’

Moreover, *da* cannot follow the *wh*-phrase directly in an interrogative clause, although it can follow a bare *wh*-phrase in isolation:

- (37) *Hvor/når da reiser de?
where/when then leave they
 (38) a. Hvor da? b. Når da?
 ‘Where then?’ ‘When then?’

On the whole, from the evidence presented in this section it is not legitimate to conclude that elements like English *then* and Norwegian *da/så* have the same status as the particles attested in Northern Italian dialects.

3. TWO TYPES OF PARTICLES

In this section, we intend to focus on the properties which distinguish between two types of particles on the basis of their etymological origin. As already mentioned above, *ti* and *lu* derive diachronically from personal pronouns, while *mo* and *po* derive from temporal adverbs.

We have seen that the two types of particles behave differently with respect to their position in the sentence: while the pronominal particles (henceforth *PSP*) always appear at the end of the clause, the adverbial particles (henceforth *ASP*) can also appear after the *wh*-item and even in sentence-initial position:

- (39) a. Quando rivaràli, **mo**? Pg
 b. Quando, **mo**, rivaràli?
when [mo] arrive-FUT-they [mo]
 ‘When will they arrive?’
- (40) a. Quando eli rivadi, **po**? Pg
 b. Quando, **po**, eli rivadi?
 c. **Po**, quando eli rivadi?
[po] when [po] are-they arrived [po]
 ‘When did they arrive?’

The difference between the two types emerges even more clearly from a cross-linguistic comparison aiming at a reconstruction of the diachronic evolution of these elements.

Drawing on Clark & Roberts (1993), we assume that the syntactic reanalysis activated in the diachronic process of grammaticalization crucially involves a stage in which a string is ambiguous between two alternative structural analyses; the structural ambiguity is resolved in the new generation by choosing the alternative which is more economical either in terms of movement or in terms of complexity of the structural tree projected.

It seems that this kind of approach can be successfully applied to the two types of *SPs* we are dealing with. In particular, the relation between the etymological origin of the two types of particles and the semantic and syntactic behaviour they display shows that the diachronic development of a lexical category is not limited to the “stripping away” of formal, lexical or phonological features, but may entail the retention of a single feature, which determines the value and, according to this, the position where the *SP* is merged; once the grammaticalization process is completed, the new *SP* can be further reanalysed and take over the formal feature and the syntactic position of functional heads which are adjacent to the original one. This extension process can be exemplified by examining minimally different dialects, where particles display different values.⁹

3.1 Pronominal sentential particles

Pronominal elements can follow two types of evolutionary paths: they can either become pronominal sentential particles (*PSPs*), like *ti* and *lu*, or be reduced to clitic forms, which are at a later stage reanalysed as agreement markers. For instance, the second person singular pronoun can surface as a clitic form in most Northern Italian dialects – as exemplified in (41a, b) with Paduan and Lombard – but also as an agreement marker in some Lombard dialects – as witnessed by (41b, c).

- (41) a. **Te vien.** Paduan
you-come
 ‘You are coming.’
- b. **Te manget.** Lombard
you-eat
 ‘You are eating.’
- c. **Manget?** Lombard
eat
 ‘Are you eating?’

Note that in the Lombard example (41b) the clitic *te* and the inflectional element *t* are both present; the inflectional element is probably derived via an enclitic form still used in interrogative contexts and in V2 contexts in the medieval period. To the best of our knowledge, no other diachronic path involving pronouns is attested.

In our view, the reason why only these two possibilities are attested is due precisely to the way diachronic processes work in reanalysing ambiguous structures. Given the distributional restrictions to which pronominal forms are subject, namely the fact that they can only occur either adjacent to the verb or dislocated-focalized in a peripheral position, they can only be reanalysed as agreement markers (if adjacent to the verb and passing through a clitic stage) or as *PSPs* (if in peripheral position, and without passing through a clitic stage).

The reanalysis process that renders a tonic pronoun an agreement marker amounts to a gradual impoverishment of the internal structure of the pronoun, which first becomes a head and then an affix. The reanalysis as SP also entails a simplification of the internal structure of the pronoun, which reduces to a head element.¹⁰

3.2 Adverbial sentential particles

Adverbial elements, from which adverbial sentential particles (*ASPs*) like *mo* and *po* derive, can develop a number of different functions in the course of their diachronic evolution, according to the structural portion of the sentence to which they happen to belong. Consider for example the particle *po* discussed above: in some Piedmontese dialects it has turned into a marker off future tense, like in the following example from Canavese:

- (42) Duman e vu **pō**. Cavanese
tomorrow I come PRT
 ‘Tomorrow I come.’

The *ASP mo*, on the other hand, has been reanalysed in some varieties as a functional element marking not a temporal but rather a modal value: in Calabrese, a group of Southern Italian dialects, it is a substitute for subjunctive morphology (obligatorily following the negative marker, a fact showing that it must be analysed as an element of the inflectional layer rather than as a modal complementizer):¹¹

- (43) a. Ci dicia nom**mu** si schianta. Calabrese
him say-PAST-1SG NEG-mu be-afraid-3SG
 ‘I told him not to be afraid.’
 b. M’arripu nom**mu** mi vagnu.
me-repair-1SG NEG-mu me get-wet-1SG
 ‘I run for cover not to get wet.’
 c. Nom**mu** ai paura.
NEG-mu have-2SG fear
 ‘Don’t be afraid.’

A particularly interesting case is provided by the adverb *ben(e)*, which involves a presupposition in several Romance languages, as exemplified in (44) with Venetian:¹²

- (44) El lo ga **ben** fato! Ve
he-it-has ben done
 ‘He surely did it!’

The form *ba*, etymologically derived from *ben*, is attested in several Lombard and Veneto dialects of the Alpine area. As discussed by Benincà (1999), it can become an inflectional element attached to inflected forms to mark either a presuppositional value – if it is added to the indicative – or an *irrealis* modality – if it is added to a conditional:¹³

- (45) a. kanta/kànteba 1. ps. sing. ind. present
 b. kantéva/kantéveba 1. ps. sing. ind. imperfect
 c. kanterò/kanteròba 1. ps. sing. ind. future
 d. kanterys/kanteryzba 1. ps. sing. conditional

In sum, *ASPs* are amenable to a wider range of usages and interpretations precisely because more structural positions are accessible to the ‘original’ adverb, thus triggering more than one possible path of reanalysis.

4. FRONTING TO [Spec,Prt]

In this section we will propose an account for the fact that all *SPs* can occur sentence-finally; under the assumption that *SPs* are located in a head position of the CP layer,

their sentence-final position can be derived via movement of their clausal complement to their specifier, as illustrated in (46).

(46) [_{Spec,prt} CP_i [_{prt}] [_{t_i}]]

By comparing this analysis with the null hypothesis, namely that *SPs* are located in the low position inside the inflectional field, it will be shown that the null hypothesis encounters a number of problems; in addition, there are empirical arguments suggesting that these particles belong to the CP layer.

Firstly, we have to exclude the possibility that *SPs* are merged inside the VP, as they have no argument 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.¹⁴

Secondly, given that low functional projections generally encode aspectual/modal features, we would expect that these particles also do, but this is not the case; on the contrary, the interpretation triggered by the presence of *SPs* concerns semantic and pragmatic aspects which are usually encoded in the left periphery of the clause.

Thirdly, the fact that they are not found in embedded contexts suggests that *SPs* belong to the highest functional domain, as this distributional asymmetry is a typical property of phenomena involving the CP field; elements of the inflectional field are in general not sensitive to the main *versus* embedded status of the clause in which they occur.

We therefore claim 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 to their specifier.

Now we intend to show that the relation between *SPs* and the preceding CP 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;¹⁵ 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 CP and any *SP*:

- (47) a. *L'à piovest, son sicur, **lu**, ieri sera Pg
it-has rained (I) am 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 C° position; there is a very straightforward syntactic argument for the hypothesis that *SPs* occupy different head positions inside the CP layer.¹⁶ Interestingly, the two particles *ti* and *po* can cooccur – in a rigid order in which *po* precedes *ti* – therefore they can obviously not be located in the same head:

- (48) Quando eli rivadi, **po, ti?** Pg
when are-they arrived po ti
 ‘When have they arrived?’

According to our account there are two possible analyses of the sequence in (48), which can be derived either as in (49) or as in (50).

- (49) a. [[*ti*] [*po*] [_{CP} quando eli rivadi]]
 b. [[*ti*] [[_{CP} quando eli rivadi]_x [*po*] t_x]]
 c. [[[[[_{CP} quando eli rivadi]_x [*po*] t_x]_y [*ti*] t_y]]]
 (50) a. [[*po*] [*ti*] [_{CP} quando eli rivadi]]
 b. [[*po*] [[_{CP} quando eli rivadi]_x [*ti*] t_x]]
 c. [[[_{CP} 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*, as in (49a), we have movement of the interrogative clause into the specifier of *po*, as in (49b), and the final word order in (49c) is obtained by raising the whole constituent formed by the CP and the particle *po* into the specifier of *ti*. In the second derivation, with *po* higher than *ti*, as in (50a), the interrogative CP 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 constituent include the lower particle.¹⁷

We have seen that some *SPs* can either be preceded by the whole interrogative clause, as in (51), or intervene between the sentence-initial *wh*-item and the rest of the clause, as in (52).¹⁸

- (51) a. Parché gnenlo, **mo?** Pg
why comes-he mo
 ‘Why is he coming?’
 b. Quando eli rivadi, **po?** Pg
when are-they arrived po
 ‘When did they arrive?’
 (52) a. Parché, **mo**, gnenlo? Pg
why mo comes-he
 ‘Why is he coming?’

- b. Quando, **po**, eli rivadi? Pg
when po are-they arrived
 ‘When have they arrived?’

Within our account the particle occupies one and the same position, the difference between (51) and (52) depending on whether it attracts to its specifier the whole clause or only the *wh*-item, stranding the clause; hence, cases like (52) are expected if we have a structure like the following, where the element checking the strong feature in the specifier of the *SP* is not the entire CP but the *wh*-item:

- (53) [FP *wh*_i [F^o *particle*] [CP *t*_i [IP...*t*_i...]]]

Only *ASPs* have the option to attract to their specifier either the whole clause or only the *wh*-constituent, stranding the rest of the clause.¹⁹ Interestingly, the clause-internal vs. clause-final position of the particle is relevant for interpretation, which therefore changes depending on whether the constituent raising to the specifier of the particle is the *wh*-item or the whole clause. We propose that all *SPs* are endowed with a strong feature that has to be checked by moving some material into their specifier: raising of the whole CP-complement is induced by the necessity for some projection of the inflectional layer (either Tense or Mood) to enter a local relation with the *SP*; whenever these projections are not relevant to the interpretation, the specifier of the particle is filled by raising only the *wh*-element.

As for the fact that the second type of sentential particles, *PSPs*, are always located in sentence-final position, we suggest that this may be interpreted as showing that they are located in a higher functional head of the left periphery, which can be crossed over only by the entire clause; alternatively, this may be due to their peculiar interpretive import, which induces a change in the perspective of presentation of the whole event; as a consequence, their feature can only be checked by raising the whole complement into the relevant specifier.

It should be finally pointed out that in interrogative clauses containing a particle, arguments are generally right-dislocated (as witnessed by the presence of resumptive clitics):

- (54) a. Dove le gavarò messe, **ti**, le chiave?! Ve
where CL-have-FUT-I put ti the keys
 ‘Where may I have put the keys?’
 b. Quando lo àla magnà, **mo**, al polastro?! Pg
when CL-has-she eaten mo the chicken
 ‘When may she have eaten the chicken?’

However, this effect is not due to the presence of the particle in itself, but is a general property of main *wh*-questions.²⁰ We surmise that the mandatory right emargination should be treated along the lines of Kayne & Pollock (2001) and Munaro, Poletto & Pollock (2001), where these cases are analysed in terms of

left-dislocation of the constituent prosodically emarginated to the specifier of a Topic projection, followed by remnant movement of the whole clause; according to this analysis, the constituents occurring after the particle have been left dislocated into a specifier of the CP layer which is lower than the one occupied by the particle itself.²¹

5. SUMMARY

In this article we have analysed the syntactic behaviour of a few sentential particles attested in North-Eastern Italian dialects.

The particles we have considered share some interesting properties: they are associated to specific clause types and can only appear in matrix clauses; they can all occur in sentence-final position, though some of them can also follow the *wh*-item in an interrogative clause. Since they display the typical behaviour of X° -elements, they have been analysed as occupying functional heads of the extended CP field.

We have suggested that the different distributional properties characterizing the two main types of particles depend on their etymological origin and, more precisely, on whether they derive from pronominal elements or from adverbial forms. By focussing on the properties that pronouns and adverbs retain when they become functional particles and the new properties they acquire in the process of grammaticalization, we have proposed that when an element is reanalysed as a functional category F° , it can express the features associated to functional projections that are merged close to F° in the structure.

We have presented a syntactic analysis in which either the *wh*-item or the whole clausal complement can raise to the specifier corresponding to the C° head 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 clause.

The 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 detailed characterization of the interpretive features they codify remains open to future research.

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NOTES

1. This paper develops and elaborates some of the issues addressed in Munaro & Poletto (2002, 2004); although the paper is the product of a constant collaboration between the two authors, for the concerns of the Italian academy Nicola Munaro takes responsibility for sections 1 and 2, and Cecilia Poletto for sections 3–5.
2. This particular facet of our research will not be dealt with here as it has been addressed in our previous work (Munaro & Poletto 2002, 2004), to which we refer the reader interested in the more strictly interpretive aspects of the issue.
3. 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 occur in initial position and have no presuppositional import. A particle displaying such properties is *e* in the Southern Veneto dialect of Taglio di Po; in this dialect an exclamative clause is fully grammatical only if the particle *e* appears in sentence-initial position, as in (i).

- (i) *E c bel libro c l'à scrito!*
e what nice book that he-has written
 'What an interesting book he wrote!'

We surmise that particles like *e* have a purely typing function and mark the exclamative illocutionary force of the utterance in which they occur; consequently, they are obligatory in the clause type they mark, unlike our *SPs*.

4. As discussed in Munaro, Poletto & Pollock (2001), 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. In the present article we will not address the issue of the interaction between the position of the *wh*-item and the presence of the particle.
5. Notice that in some cases the particle can either precede or follow an embedded clause:

- (i) a. *Vien che fazemo sta roba, mo!*
 b. *Vien mo, che fazemo sta roba!*
come [mo] that (we) do this thing [mo]
 'Come, let us do this thing!'

As pointed out by De Lorenzo (2005), also in Ampezzan, a Rhaeto-romance variety spoken in the northernmost part of Veneto, some particles can appear between the main verb and an embedded infinitival or tensed clause in utterances characterized by an imperative illocutionary force:

- (ii) a. *Te dezìdesto po a veni?!*
REFL-decide po to come
 'Come on, hurry up!'
 b. *Và mo a véde de to fardèl!*
go mo to look of your brother
 'Go and look after your brother!'

- (iii) a. Vårda **mo** ci che se véde!
look mo who that one sees
 ‘Look who is here!’
- b. Vardà ben **vè**, no ve ferméde ìnze càlche ostarìa!
look well vè not REFL-stop in some pub
 ‘Look, do not stop in some pub!’

6. A further common distributional feature concerns the fact that all *SPs* are incompatible with sentential negation, as shown by the Pagotto examples in (i) and (ii).

- (i) a. *Andé no i é/éli ndadi, **ti**?
where not they-are/are-they gone ti
- b. *No i a/ali fat che, **mo**?
not they-have/have-they done what mo
- (ii) a. *No l’à piovest, **lu**.
not it-has rained lu
- b. *No l’è rivà (**lu**) nisuni, (**lu**).
not it-has arrived [lu] anybody [lu]

We do not have yet an adequate explanation for this fact and leave a deeper investigation of this issue for future research.

7. Another possible analysis is that *SPs* are merged in a low specifier position of the IP field and are subsequently raised to some specifier of the CP layer; however, this option should be discarded in view of the impossibility for these *SPs* to undergo any kind of modification.

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

- (i) a. Al to amigo l’è rivà, **lu**.
the your friend he-has arrived lu
 ‘Your friend has arrived.’
- b. I to amighi i é rivadi, lori/***lu**.
the your friends they-have arrived they/lu
 ‘Your friends have arrived’

Furthermore, *lu* is generally compatible with postverbal subjects and induces a contrastive focalization of the subject with any verb class. The non-contrastive interpretation is possible only with right dislocation of the subject.

9. The proposed analysis provides support for the hypothesis – put forth by Roberts & Roussou (1999) – that syntactic change is ultimately due to a parametric transformation in the lexical properties of individual functional heads, intended as the necessity of the PF-realization of a given functional feature F.

10. This leaves open the possibility that these particles may become part of the verbal inflection, marking for example special interpretations of a given sentence type. This possibility apparently is not attested; notice however that the inflected verb should move very high in the CP layer in order to incorporate such inflectional element.

11. Notice that *mu* has to be repeated in coordination:

- (i) Si risorviu **mu** dassa e **mu** disponi.
REFL-decide-past-3SG mu leave-3SG and mu arrange
 ‘She decided to leave and arrange [= make her will].’

For further details on the syntactic and semantic properties of *mu* the reader is referred to Damonte (2004).

12. The presupposition involved in (44) is that the person referred to was to perform the action and, by adding *ben*, the speaker reinforces the statement that he actually did it.
13. The same adverb is used in some Occitan dialects as a sentential particle to mark a main non-genuine interrogative:

- | | |
|--|--|
| (i) a. Se bes?
<i>se come</i>
'Are you coming?' | b. Be bes?
<i>be come</i>
'Don't you come?' |
|--|--|

The question in (ia) is introduced by the particle *se*, marking genuine *yes/no* interrogatives; in (ib) a different particle, *be*, deriving from the adverb corresponding to English *well*, marks the presuppositional value of a biased question, expressing the fact that the speaker expects a positive answer.

14. Moreover, the structural position of the particle should be in that case the lowest specifier position above the VP projection: 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.
15. 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). An anonymous reviewer observes that, if antisymmetry holds, a parenthetical cannot be inserted between a head and its complement either; consequently, either parentheticals don't count for the purpose of verifying antisymmetry, or parentheticals come as specifiers of designated heads embedding subparts of the clause; in the second case, (47) is not automatically excluded even if in fact the clause is the specifier of *lu/ti*; it is also necessary to assume that the clause cannot contain one of the designated heads hosting parentheticals, but in this case no argument exists to the effect that the clause raises to the specifier of the particle rather than higher (unless it can be demonstrated that parentheticals can be introduced by designated heads in the space between *lu/ti* and the next head up). However, if the sentence located in the specifier position of the particle contains a parenthetical position, for this to intervene between the sentence and the particle, the parenthetical position should be inside the VP of the clause, an assumption which seems implausible to us given that the VP structure is usually assumed to contain arguments; hence, our argument holds.
16. Furthermore, each particle seems to mark a different interpretive value; 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.
17. 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] | are-they arrived | [po/ti] [ti/po] |
| | | 'When have they arrived?' | | | | |

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. Notice finally that some speakers of Ampezzan accept the cooccurrence of sentence-initial *po* with sentence final *mo*:

- (ii) **Po**, ce vosto che te dighe **mo**?
po what want-you that (I) you-tell mo
 ‘What can I tell you?’

18. The examples in (52) show that the particle can be located in the left periphery, as it precedes the cluster formed by inflected verb and subject clitic pronoun: we take subject clitic inversion to witness that (some type of) verb movement to the CP layer has applied. If we took (51) to be the basic sequence, in view of (52) we would have to admit that the particle can either be merged in two different positions, belonging to very different sentence domains, or be merged very low in the structure and subsequently moved to the CP area for some reason to be determined. This hypothesis does not look plausible, as *SPs* do not encode any aspectual feature.
19. We propose that the difference between particles that admit for this possibility and particles that do not should be linked to the semantic feature the particle marks. Notice also that 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.
20. For further discussion on this issue the reader is referred to Antinucci & Cinque (1977) and Munaro, Poletto & Pollock (2001). This emargination effect is not attested in imperative clauses, where an object DP can either occur in its canonical position or be right dislocated after the particle:

- (i) a. Magna sta minestra, **mo**!
 b. Magna, **mo**, sta minestra!
 c. Magnela, **mo**, sta minestra!
eat (CL) [mo] this soup [mo]
 ‘Eat (it) this soup!’

21. An empirical argument in favour of the idea that in the cases under examination what looks like right dislocation is left dislocation followed by clausal movement is provided by the contrasts in (i) and (ii). As noted by Benincà (1988), right dislocation can be preceded by a focalized constituent, which is prosodically tied to the verbal complex. Interestingly, this does not hold for the kind of constructions we are examining here, as witnessed by the following contrast in Venetian:

- (i) a. *Vèrzila **mo** SUBITO, sta finestra!
 b. Vèrzila **mo**, subito, sta finestra
open-it [mo] soon this window
 ‘Open soon this window’

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