

On the contextual anchoring of discourse-markers

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Building on previous studies on the syntactization of formal features pertaining to the syntax-discourse interface (cf. Speas & Tenny (2003), Sigurdsson (2004), Bianchi (2006), Baker (2008), Giorgi (2010), Haegeman & Hill (2013), Haegeman (2014)), in this work I will sketch a formal account of the syntactic and interpretive properties of the discourse-markers known as interjections. Adopting a cartographic approach to the functional layout of the highest portion of the clausal left periphery, I will argue that interjections can be split into different categories according to the degree of prosodic and syntactic integration with the associated clause, the degree of integration being strictly connected to their discourse linking properties.

Italo-Romance provides evidence for the existence of lexical interjections that must be integrated with the associated clause and are intrinsically discourse-linked, in the sense that they can only be used to reply to a previous utterance in the discourse situation and to express the speaker's personal stance. They are exemplified in (1) with *mo vaca* and *mo deg* in the Emilian dialects of Modena and Reggio and in (2) with *eccome/altroché* in standard Italian:

- (1) a. *Mo vaca* *(s') l'è èlt! Modena
Interjection if-he-is tall
'He is tall indeed!'
b. *Mo deg* *(c') l'è èlt! Reggio
Interjection that-he-is tall
'He is tall indeed!'
- (2) *Eccome/Altroché* *(se) Gianni ha passato l'esame!
Interjection if John has passed the exam!
'John has passed the exam indeed!'

In (1)/(2) the clause initial interjection is obligatorily followed by the complementizer *se/che* and is prosodically integrated with the associated clause. No lexical element can intervene between *mo* and *vaca/deg*; moreover, a topicalized constituent must follow the complementizer, which suggests that *se/che* occupy the head Force^o - rather than a lower head of the CP layer - if, as proposed by Rizzi (1997), Topic projections are lower than Force. On the other hand, the discourse particle *mo* in (1) is intrinsically related to the speaker's perspective and to his commitment with respect to the relevant propositional content; following Hinterhölzl & Munaro (2015)'s proposal that the particle *mo* is linked to (the head EvalS^o of) an Eval(uative)S(peaker) projection immediately dominating ForceP, I suggest that both *mo* and *eccome/altroché* are first merged as the head EvalS^o of the projection EvalSP (with the items *vaca/deg* occupying spec,ForceP):

- (3) [EvalSP [EvalS^o Mo] [ForceP vaca/deg [Force^o se/che] [FinP l'è èlt!]]]
(4) [EvalSP Eccome/Altroché [ForceP [Force^o se] [FinP Gianni ha passato l'esame!]]]

A different class of lexical interjections, that can (but need not) be integrated with the associated clause, is exemplified by items like *sorbla/madosca* in the Emilian dialects and by *caspita/accidenti* in standard Italian: the interjection can either be followed by *se* or be prosodically and syntactically independent, in which case it can either precede or follow the associated clause. I surmise that these interjections can be analyzed as lexicalizing either the head EvalS^o, like in (5a), or the head of a contiguous SpeechAct projection (Haegeman & Hill (2013), Haegeman (2014)), like in (5b), where the interjection raises to the adjacent SpeechAct^o, giving rise to an independent illocutionary act which does not need any linguistic antecedent in the speech situation; the clause final position of the interjection can be derived by fronting the associated clause FinP to Spec,SpeechActP in order to satisfy a criterial constraint à la Rizzi, like in (5c):

- (5) a. [EvalSP [EvalS^o Caspita/Accidenti] [ForceP [Force^o se] [FinP Gianni ha passato l'esame!]]]

- b. [SpeechActP [SA°Caspita/Accidenti!]_x] [EvalSP [EvalS° t_x] [ForceP [FinP Gianni ha passato l'esame!]]]
- c. [SpeechActP [FinP Gianni ha passato l'esame!]_x] [SA°Caspita/Accidenti!] [EvalSP [ForceP t_x]]

Interestingly, only the lexical interjections belonging to the second class can be uttered in isolation in out of the blue contexts; this property can be derived by the hypothesis that lexical interjections occupying the head SpeechAct° - and attracting the associated clause to the corresponding specifier - can reach the head of the adjacent Speaker projection where, according to Giorgi (2010)/(2012), the speaker's spatio-temporal coordinates are codified (cf. also Ritter & Wiltschko (2014) on the existence of a syncretic head encoding spatial and temporal anchoring):

- (6) [SpeakerP [Sp° Sorbla!/Caspita!/Accidenti!]_x] [SpeechActP [FinP Ø]_y] [SA° t_x] [ForceP t_y]]

I submit that only the raising of the interjection to the next head Speaker° can provide the appropriate contextual anchoring of the utterance through the selection of the (default) spatio-temporal coordinates (i.e. *hic et nunc*), so that the interjection will be spelled-out in isolation, without the phonetic realization of the associated clause.

Let us turn next to non-lexical vocalic interjections such as *ah/eh/ih/oh/uh*, which emphatically express the speaker's strong emotional reaction to a linguistic or extra-linguistic event that is manifest in the speech situation. As witnessed by the minimal pair in (7), they appear systematically in clause initial position and can co-occur with a lexical interjection, preceding it:

- (7) a. Ah/Eh/Ih/Oh/Uh, eccome/altroché/accidenti/caspita se Gianni ha passato l'esame!
 b. *Eccome/Altroché/Accidenti/Caspita se Gianni ha passato l'esame, ah/eh/ih/oh/uh!
 [Interjection] interjection if John has passed the exam [Interjection]

On the basis of their distributional and interpretive properties, it is extremely tempting to analyze non-lexical interjections as the lexicalization of the highest head Speaker°. Under the plausible assumption that Spec,SpeakerP is occupied by the speaker's contextual coordinates, and is therefore inaccessible to the fronting of the associated clause, we straightforwardly derive the ungrammaticality of (7b). Empirical evidence that non-lexical interjections may raise to Speaker° from a lower position is provided by upper Southern Italian dialects, where the presence of the interjection in optative and jussive clauses triggers the obligatory presence of a complementizer, which is otherwise optional:

- (8) a. (Ca) tə putesserə accidə! Santa Maria Capua Vetere (Northern Campanian)
 (That) you could kill
 b. Ih *(ca) tə putesserə accidə!
 Int *(that) you could kill
 'May they kill you!'

As discussed in detail by Colasanti & Silvestri (2016), the insertion of a non-lexical interjection within the non-propositional area of the clause located above Force interacts in various ways with the embedded syntactic structure, triggering the spell-out of lower heads, among which Force° (lexicalized in (8) by the complementizer *ca*). We can assume that, while lexical interjections of the second class may raise by head movement to Speaker°, raising of non-lexical interjections to Speaker° must obtain in order to achieve the deictic reference to the event of the external world that is the source of the speaker's mental state. As represented in (9b), on its way up to Speaker°, from SpeechAct° the interjection may attract the associated FinP to its specifier, stranding the complementizer in Force°, so that only the prosodic unit formed by interjection and complementizer will be spelled-out (a possibility that is indeed attested in Southern Italian dialects, as pointed out by Colasanti & Silvestri (2016)):

- (9) a. Ih-chə...! Santa Maria del Cedro (Northern Calabrian)
b. [SpeakerP [Sp° Ih_x] [SpeechActP [FinP Ø]_y [SA° t_x] [ForceP [Force° chə] t_y]]