FROM CONNECTIVE ADVERB TO MODAL PARTICLE: A GENERATIVE ANALYSIS OF POI

1. INTRODUCTION
Since its foundation (Chomsky 1957, 1981), generative linguistics has been concerned with sentences as the maximum level of analysis. This privileged position of the sentence, including complex sentences, as the object of study in the generative approach should not be interpreted as a complete lack of interest in those aspects of pragmatic meaning that link the sentence with other dimensions (e.g. external word, discourse participants, and information structure) and that clearly affect the interpretation of a sentence. The study of the interface between syntax and pragmatics has in fact been a central topic in generativist research, especially within the so-called cartographic approach (initiated by Rizzi 1997, Cinque 1999, and Benincà 2001). The syntax-pragmatics interface is key to cartographic generativist approaches, which focus on the relationship between the syntax of a sentence and its interpretation within a given pragmatic context. Indeed, the cartographic approach can be seen as an attempt to ‘syntacticize’ pragmatic categories, such as speech acts, conversation participants, and information-structure categories such as topic and focus by including them in the clause’s functional structure (see Speas & Tenny 2003, Munaro & Poletto 2008, Giorgi 2010, Haegeman & Hill 2013, Wiltschko 2014, Del Gobbo et al. 2015, among many others, as well as Cinque & Rizzi 2016 for a recent overview of cartographic work on functional structure).

Despite the availability of fine-grained descriptions of the functional structure of the left periphery of the clause that have been provided by cartographic generativist work, the category of connectives addressed in this volume has been largely neglected. This is perhaps due to the fact that it is not easy to design clear tests to identify this class as distinct from other word classes, and connectives have often been subsumed into other classes (for instance adverbs). By connectives we mean those words or phrases that have a logico-semantic function within an articulated text or set of utterances, linking two or more linguistic units through relations such as consequence, concession, exemplification, and reformulation. The logical functions of connectives do not encompass the relationships between the parts of a sentence, as with complementizers or relative pronouns, but rather link up utterances and events (Ferrari 2010).

The functions and distribution of connectives, however, may help us to understand their development into other categories such as modal particles, which, unlike connectives, have been extensively discussed in Generative Grammar. Indeed, the main goal of this paper is to outline the differences between connectives and modal particles, focusing on a set of criteria to establish the boundaries between these two categories. To this end, we want to investigate the path that leads connectives to lose their intrinsic logical function and to gradually become more integrated within the syntactic structure and more inclined to express modal meanings. The adverb poi forms the empirical basis for the study, beginning as a temporal and logical connective, before acquiring pragmatic functions typical of discourse makers and subsequently evolving into a modal particle. Using the example of poi, in what follows, we shall identify three distinct categories:2

---

1 We would like to thank the editors of this volume, in particular Angela Ferrari, and anonymous reviewer, for useful comments and fruitful discussion. We are also grateful to Andrea Sàsò and Jan Casalicchio for valuable remarks and observations.

2 The following distinction relies on an important differentiation between text and discourse. By text, we mean the linguistic material that is clearly identifiable in terms of utterances and their propositions in a given communicative situation. Discourse, by contrast, is a much more complex notion which also includes implied meanings such as
a) Connectives, which are linguistic items whose primary function is to convey relations between two linguistic items at inter-sentential level; even if they do not directly contribute to the propositional content of the sentence, they provide specifications for situating the event or for establishing logical relations between events.

b) Discourse markers, which do not affect the propositional content of the host sentence and which operate at the level of the discourse and of the argumentative chain.

c) Modal particles, which we define as a type of pragmatic marker with particular modal meanings and with a reduced categorial status (i.e. they are weak elements, in the sense of Cardinaletti & Starke 1999, which implies that they are bound to the sentence-internal position, cannot be focused, coordinated, fronted or modified).

The boundaries between connectives and discourse markers have not been neatly defined in the specialist literature, where the class of connectives has been expanded so as to include elements that in other classifications are labelled as discourse markers (see, e.g., Ferrari & Zampese 2016). Alternatively, the category of discourse markers is viewed as a hypernym with respect to connectives, in the sense that all connectives are discourse markers but not all discourse markers are connectives (see, e.g., Pons Bordería 2006, Remberger in press). The proposed tripartite distinction proves particularly useful in understanding the functions and properties of the adverb poi. Moreover, we propose that this tripartite distinction corresponds to different structural positions of poi which are associated with different meanings of this element. More specifically, when used as a connective poi is to be located in the CP, when used as a modal particle poi is bound to the IP and when used as a temporal adverb it is hosted in an Adverb position in the IP. When used as a discourse marker, poi is compatible with all three positions.

2. THE FUNCTIONS AND THE SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION OF POI

In this section the different functions of poi will be described. We assume that the different functions of poi should be understood in terms of a diachronic evolutionary process which has its origins in the meaning of poi as a temporal adverb (see Hansen 1995 on French puis; see also Diewald 1997, Hansen 2008 and Sansò 2020 for other elements). When reviewing the functions of poi, we will attempt to establish a correlation between function and position, even though we are aware that a clear-cut one-to-one correspondence is not always possible.

In the description of the distribution of poi, we will make reference to three positions within the sentence: the initial, the middle, and the final position. These positions correspond to projections within the three main domains of the generative representation of the sentence: the verb phrase (VP), a tense or inflectional phrase (IP) and a complementizer phrase (CP):

(1) [CP [IP [VP]]]

The VP represents the verb and its arguments, while the IP encodes information on the sentence’s tense, aspect, and mood. The CP indicates the clause type of the IP in a particular pragmatic situation, specifying the illocutionary force and the type of sentence (e.g. if it is a

---

3 According to the proposed classification, pragmatic connectives, as opposed to logical connectives like poi, may well fall under the definition of discourse markers. Since in this paper we are concerned with poi, we leave this issue aside for the time being. For a different view, we refer the reader to Ferrari (in press) and to Moeschler (this volume) where a unifying treatment of the two groups of connectives (logical/semantic vs pragmatic connectives) is proposed along with the claim that all connectives constitute a subclass of discourse markers.

4 Most of the examples reported in this paper come from following corpora of Italian: the corpus of written Italian CORIS, the platform PAISÀ for the acquisition of Italian on annotated corpora, the corpus of spoken Italian KIParla, and the corpus of of texts from the Italian newspaper La Repubblica. For orthographic consistency, some transcriptions have been adjusted (e.g. with respect to punctuation or the use of capital letters). In a few cases an equivalent of poi is missing from the English translation.
declarative, a question or an imperative) and involving pragmatically marked constructions such as focalizations and left dislocations. It can also function as the link between the IP and another (subordinate) sentence.

The terms initial, middle, and final should not be understood as absolute or fixed positions in the sentence, but rather, as shorthand for sets of positions within the syntactic domains in (1). When *poi* is in initial position, it is typically followed by the verb, but can be preceded by a topic or another functional element. Similarly, the final position must be understood as a postverbal position where *poi* can be followed by other constituents.

### 2.1. *Poi* as a connective: Temporal and logical succession

As a temporal adverb, *poi* may indicate posteriority with respect to (i) the speech time or (ii) a previous event. Only in the latter case is *poi* a connective. When the adverb *poi* expresses posteriority with respect to the speech time, it contributes a temporal localization to the interpretation of the host sentence, situating the event at a later time, which is posterior to the utterance time (*afterwards, later*):

(2)  
\[\text{a. } I \text{ risultati li vedremo dopo a primavera. (CORIS)}\]  
‘We will see the results later in the Spring.’

\[\text{b. } \text{È Trebi, vivo, che voglio. I suoi casini li sapremo poi. (CORIS)}\]  
‘It’s Trebi, alive, that I want. We will get to know his troubles later.’

We argue that, in this function, *poi* sits in the specifier position of a temporal (T) functional projection withing the pre-VP lower adverb space (Cinque 1999), which, following Cinque, we label T(posterior). The postverbal position is then derived by the independent movement of the verb to the IP, to a position higher than the adverb (in (3) the initial constituent is dislocated from the VP to the CP):

(3)  
\[\text{[CP I suoi casini [IP li sapremo [T(posterior) poi [VP]]]]}\]

Even if this can be identified as the base position of temporal *poi* expressing posteriority with respect to the speech time, the sentence initial position is not ruled out. As is typical of several types of adverb, *poi* can also undergo general displacement processes, such as preposing into some specific position of the left periphery:

(4)  
\[\text{Poi le parlerò. (Treccani, s.v. poi)}\]  
‘Later I will talk to her.’

The initial position is characteristic of *poi* as a temporal connective, which marks the temporal situation of the event denoted in the host sentence with respect to a previous event. In this function, *poi* can be seen as a two-place predicate which contributes a binary relation over events to the sentence meaning. The arguments of this binary predicate are (con-)textually derived, with the first argument coinciding with the earlier event described in the preceding utterance and the second argument corresponding to the sentence hosting *poi*:

(5)  
\[\text{Guardò il babbo, poi si volse al fuoristrada. (CORIS)}\]  
‘S/he looked at her father, then turned towards their off-road vehicle.’

This is the typical function of temporal connectives which order two events in a temporal relation. Semantically, *poi* acts as a modifier of an underlying event variable (à la Davidson 1967). When it occurs sentence-initially, *poi* contributes to the time frame and setting within which the main predication holds, restricting the temporal dimension of the sentence. Elements
with this function, including adverbs and adverbials, have been identified as scene-setting topics (Chafe 1976), frame-setting topics (Krifka 2007) or limiting topics (Frascarelli 2017). They are not topics in the traditional sense, in that the sentences they introduce are not about them, nor do they constitute given information. Despite their slightly different functions, scene setters generally “limit the applicability of the main predication to a certain restricted domain” (Chafe 1976: 50) – a temporal dimension in the case of poi. Like topics, scene-setters occur at the beginning of the sentence, in the higher part of the CP (Benincà & Poletto 2004, Frascarelli 2017):

(6) [CP [ Scene-Setting [IP [T_{posterior} [VP]]]]]

Instead of temporal succession (afterwards, at a later time), connective poi can express logical succession or sequence (next in order, in addition). The initial (scene-setting) position is also frequent in this function:

(7) Come si diventa orafi? Innanzitutto frequentando una scuola specializzata. Poi si apprendono “dal vivo” le tecniche adottate dai singoli artigiani. (CORIS)
‘How do you learn to become a goldsmith? First of all, by attending a specialist school. Then, you learn “in person” the techniques adopted by the individual craftsmen.’

Here the meaning and the connective function of poi have evolved from the basic temporal value to a logical value, establishing a logical (rather than temporal) order. A binary relation still holds between the two utterances, and this is what poi contributes to the semantics of its host sentence. As a connective, both in its temporal and logical value, poi serves as a means of structuring the text, marking the development of the events, and indicating the linear progression of the utterances and thus the hierarchical organization of the text (see Diewald 1997 for a similar development of German denn). In this function, poi occurs predominantly in the initial position, but the middle position is also possible:

(8) Incontrando ieri i giornalisti, Riccio ha ricordato le difficili condizioni in cui era costretto a lavorare [...]. Riccio ha poi anche parlato del suo tenore di vita “quasi francescano”. (CORIS)
‘When he met the journalists yesterday, Riccio recalled the difficult conditions in which he was forced to work [...]. Riccio then also talked about his “almost-Franciscan” way of life.’

(9) Molto ricca anche la guida di SuperEva all’indirizzo http://guide.supereva.it/salute-e-benessere Ci sono poi siti che hanno l’aspetto di una rivista ma forniscono molti servizi informativi. (CORIS)
‘The SuperEva guide at the address http://guide.supereva.it/salute-e-benessere is also very rich (in information). There are in addition sites that look like a journal but provide many information services.’

In the middle position, however, the meaning of poi can be ambiguous between a temporal/logical reading, which is more prominent in (8), and an argumentative value (in addition, besides), more prominent in (9). The latter value already hints at the discourse functions of poi, which will be discussed in the next section.

**2.2. Poi as a discourse marker: Demarcation, conclusion, and contrast**

The next step in the functional development of poi is the demarcation function as a discourse marker. Indeed, when the temporal or logical succession shifts from the text to the discourse,
*poi* signals a demarcation between salient points, presenting the discourse as the development of an argumentative chain. In this function, *poi* often characterizes the progression and the structure of the argument, introducing a new topic or, more commonly, a sub-argument, thus acting as a boundary marker (‘demarcativo’ in Bazzanella 2011; see also Sansò 2020).

This function can be derived from its original temporal meaning: temporal succession implies temporal separation between two events that do not occur simultaneously but rather in a chronological order. Similarly, as a discourse marker, *poi* emphasizes the logical separation between points or arguments in the discourse, ordering them – hierarchically – along an argumentative chain: a new topic or a sub-argument is introduced. The topic or argument shift is usually indicated in the initial position, which is related to scene-setting topic functions and can be seen as a functional change from the temporal to the argumentative frame:

(10) a. *Un video così lo sanno fare pure i video amatori, ma la canzone *poi* che cosa mi rappresenta?* (PAISÀ) ‘Even video amateurs are able to make a video like that, but then what does the song represent?’

b. *La prossima volta sarai più determinata, ma sì perché *poi* è uno con cui magari non vado neanche d’accordo.* (KIParla) ‘Next time you’ll be more determined, because you know, he could well be somebody I don’t even get on well with.’

c. *Addirittura non ho nemmeno mai preso la bici che *poi* è una cosa stranissima a Bologna.* (KIParla) ‘I haven’t even ever taken the bike, which is a very strange thing in Bologna.’

As we can see from these examples, here the succession concerns the discourse and the organization of the argumentation, not necessarily the content of the previous utterances or the sequence of events described in the text. This suggests that the utterance introduced by *poi* is not temporally or logically linked to a previous assertion, but rather that new information is being added. This is especially true when *poi* is used with the conjunction *e* ‘and’ in *e poi*, whose argumentative value is particularly salient, in that it is frequently used to add a new element in a line of reasoning.

(11) *Ma non è che puoi mollare una ragazza che ha un tumore al cervello. E *poi* piacevo ai suoi genitori, e lei aveva un fratellino che è un bambino davvero in gamba.* (CORIS) ‘You can’t ditch a girl who has a brain tumour. Plus, her parents liked me, and she had a little brother who was a very smart kid.’

Argumentative separation may be loaded with additional functions and, in these cases, more positions are available. *Poi* can help to close off a whole discourse chunk, indicating the conclusion with respect to a previous discourse unit (or, indeed, with respect to the whole previous discourse) which is presented as a premise to the current statement. It is especially in questions that *poi* indicates the conclusion and the end result from an argumentative succession or from previous knowledge (*in the end, finally, at last, ultimately*), as illustrated in (12), although the same value can also be found with declarative sentences, especially when commenting on decisions:

(12) a. *È partito *poi*?* (Treccani, s.v. *poi*) ‘Did he finally leave?’

b. *S’è convinto *poi*?* (Treccani, s.v. *poi*) ‘Was he convinced at last?’
c. Non ci è poi voluto andare.
‘He didn’t want to go in the end.’

The turning-point separation introduced by *poi* can also acquire a contrastive value, often along with a sense of aversion, dissent or counter-expectedness (*after all, at any rate, despite everything, in spite of expectations)*:

(13)  *Cambia atteggiamento, ti conviene. Accetta questo consiglio e cerca di essere umile senza insultare gli altri o chi la pensa diversamente da te, fai commenti costruttivi e non due righe da fanboy infantile. Vedrai che con il tempo acquisterai rispetto e i -18 saranno soltanto un lontano ricordo. Poi sei libero di fare come vuoi.* (PAISÀ)
‘You’d better change your attitude. Take this advice and try to be humble without insulting others or those who think differently from you, make constructive comments and not just two lines like a childish fanboy. You’ll see, with time you will be respected and the -18 will only be a distant memory. At any rate, you are free to do what you like.’

(14)  a. *Non siamo poi così lontani dalla verità.* (Bazzanella 1995: 226)
‘We are not so far from the truth, after all.’

b. *Non è poi così male!* (Coniglio 2008: 112)
‘It’s not so bad, after all.’

In (13) the contrast refers to the previous argument, which thus functions as a premise for the current statement including *poi*, but in other cases, as in (14), the contrast may bear on a prior discourse, shared knowledge or expectations that form part of the common ground of the conversation participants. In the latter function, *poi* emphatically expresses a toned-down dissent or the rejection of a previous claim (Cardinaletti 2011: 513) by contrasting the current utterance with prior specific presuppositions on the part of the hearer and/or the speaker and by directing the hearer to an update of the common ground. In the light of these observations, it is thus not surprising that, in this function, *poi* typically occurs in negative sentences (14) and in interrogative sentences introduced by *ma* ‘but’ with a counter-expectedational meaning, as in (15):

(15)  a. *Ma Telecom ha poi così bisogno di alleati italiani?* (La Repubblica)
‘Does Telecom really need Italian partners?’

b. *Ma siete poi sicuri che i giocatori selezionati non hanno fatto meglio?* (La Repubblica)
‘Are you really sure that the selected players didn’t do better?’

When the scope of *poi* shifts from the text to the discourse, performing functions at the level of the discourse structure, its semantic contribution to the host sentence becomes somewhat blurred and is heavily dependent on extra-sentential discourse factors. *Poi* no longer contributes a binary relation, whose arguments are specific events derived from the previous text, and it thus no longer provides the temporal or logical coordinates for the interpretation of the event denoted in its host sentence. Instead, it situates the current utterance in the discourse, signalling specific discourse relations and providing instructions to the hearer on how to place the sentence along the argumentative chain. In this function, the meaning of *poi* does not affect the propositional content of its host sentence.

In terms of its distribution *poi* can occur in almost all positions when it indicates the discourse relations discussed in this section, although we can identify some tendencies: demarcation *poi* tends to occur in the initial position, while conclusive *poi* is more common in the final position (especially in questions); the other contrastive values are more frequently
associated with the highest portion of IP. In the sentence-final position, a degree of ambiguity with a temporal interpretation with *poī* remains, insofar as the conclusion or the contrast can be intended in terms of posteriority with respect to the previous discourse.

We take these differences as the pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic reflexes of a different status of *poī*, which no longer functions as a connective proper but as a discourse marker.

2.3. *Poī* as a modal particle: The presuppositional function and the IP layer

The last function of *poī* that we analyse in this paper is that of a modal particle, that is, as an element that conveys information about the speaker’s attitude or the epistemic state of discourse participants, without contributing to the descriptive content of the utterance (Zimmermann 2011). In its use as a modal particle, which correlates with a conclusive meaning (*finally, eventually, in the end*, cf. (12) above), *poī* does not necessarily imply a contrast with a previous argument or presupposition. It may provide (16a) or request (16b,c) a confirmation of an expectation or a presupposition:

(16) a. *Il crudo poī l’ho preso alla fine.* (KIParla)
   ‘The Parma ham, I took it in the end.’

b. *L’ha poī scritto quel romanzo?* (La Repubblica)
   ‘Did he eventually write that novel?’

c. *Raccontami di te, piuttosto: hai poī regolarizzato la tua posizione?* (CORIS)
   ‘Tell me about you, instead: Did you finally regularize your position?’

This confirmation function usually requires a reference to a preceding communicative situation, where an event was believed to take place or had been temporarily accepted as true prior to its occurrence, as is typical of modal particles (see Diewald 1997). The speaker then brings up this pending event at a later time confirming or asking about its truth, inviting a settlement and a conclusive resolution of the open issue. This usage is typical of polar questions (see also Munaro & Poletto 2008), where the verification function of *poī* is characterized by a presuppositional meaning, in that it presupposes previous knowledge and qualifies the information requested in the interrogative speech act as ‘already given’. The reference to a preceding communicative situation can be more or less immediate and perceptible, depending on the conversational common ground. It can also be entirely absent when the expectation or presupposition is based on pragmatic inferences. In general, therefore, in this function *poī* triggers the presupposition of background information as part of the previous discourse, as shared knowledge or as inferred assumptions from previous knowledge. In questions, in particular, the speaker requests the hearer to evoke this background information (see also Manzini 2015).

In this type of question, *poī* can additionally “express speaker’s concern or interest with respect to the information being asked for” (Coniglio 2008: 112), as in (17): 5

(17) *Ha poī cantato alla festa?*
   ‘Did s/he sing at the party?’

We assume that in the sentences in (16) and (17) *poī* behaves as a modal particle and appears in the higher portion of the IP (Cinque 1999, Coniglio 2008). Crucially, the higher portion of Italian IP corresponds to the German middle field where German modal particles occur (see, e.g., Thurmair 1989, Abraham 1991, Coniglio 2011). Modal particles are also confined to fixed syntactic position(s) in French (Hansen 1998, Waltereit & Detges 2007) and in Italian (Coniglio 5) This function of *poī* resembles the use of German modal particle *denn* in root questions, where “it gives rise to an attitude of wondering on the side of the speaker” (Bayer 2012: 14).
The evolution of the syntactic placement and the meaning of *poi* is parallel to the emergence and grammaticalization of German modal particles, in that the occurrence of the new meanings requires—or develops together with—the appearance of new, specialized syntactic positions and a structural reduction process (modal particles are weak elements in Cardinaletti & Starke’s 1999 sense). Following Coniglio (2008) and Cardinaletti (2011), and standard reference work on German modal particles (Thurmair 1989), we therefore argue that *poi* used as a modal particle occurs in the specifier of dedicated functional projections in the highest portion of IP, the Mood/Mod field:

\[
\[\text{CP} \left[ \text{Scene-Setting} \right] \left[ \text{IP} \left[ \text{Mood/ModField} \left[ \text{poi} \left[ T_{\text{posterior}} \left[ \text{VP} \right] \right] \right] \right] \right] \]
\]

It is important to note that while the modal particle *poi* can occasionally occur in final position, which creates ambiguity with the temporal or discourse functions, it cannot occur in initial position. That is *poi* in the initial position cannot be interpreted as a modal particle, which speaks in favour of the presence of a dedicated function of *poi* as a modal particle. In interrogative sentences, the function of initial *poi* ranges from temporal connective to discourse marker, but the presuppositional meaning is ruled out.

### 3. Scope Distinctions
Generative linguistics deals with clause structure explores not only the functions performed by an element, but also its position within the clause, its scope and the level at which it operates when serving these functions, as well as its syntactic distribution. Let us start by considering the scope of *poi* with respect to its different functions.

When expressing temporal succession and logical sequence (cf. §2.1), the adverb *poi* regulates the relations between specific utterances with respect to their propositional content. In this function, *poi* behaves as a typical connective that guarantees textual cohesion and coherence. Its scope is extra-sentential, inasmuch as it acts above the level of the individual sentence. Similarly, *poi* scopes at a higher linguistic level when it contributes to the structure and management of the discourse, referring to the relations between discourse chunks rather than individual utterances. This is the case when *poi* performs a demarcation function, as well as when it characterizes the relation between the current message and the previous discourse in terms of contrast or conclusion. In this function, *poi* may also imply the rejection or attenuation of a previous claim, expressing a sense of counter-expectedness (cf. §2.2). The scope is still the discourse.

An important functional shift occurs when *poi* starts to indicate speaker’s stance or information state. The expression of the speaker’s attitudes and emotions can be concomitant with other discourse functions: indeed, a sense of dissent or aversion may be associated with the concessive or with the counter-expected use (cf. §2.2). The speakers manifest their attitude or emotion towards the content of the sentence hosting *poi*, that is, towards the proposition.

---

6 Some German modal particles have also undergone phonological reduction becoming clitic elements. This is not the case for Italian *poi*, which contains the sound [ɔ] that can only be found in stressed syllables (Cardinaletti 2011: 497). It must be noted, however, that an important prosodic property characterizes *poi* as a modal particle, as opposed to its other functions (e.g. as a temporal adverb): it cannot bear stress at the phrase level, that is, it fails to qualify as a metric head at the level of the phonological or intonational phrase in the prosodic hierarchy. In other words, modal particle *poi* cannot be stressed emphatically. From a syntactic viewpoint, modal particle *poi* cannot be focused, coordinated, fronted or modified (see Cardinaletti 2011).

7 In some generative accounts, the final position is derived through movement of the linguistic material preceding the modal particle into a higher position (see Munaro & Poletto 2008 and Cardinaletti 2011).
As discussed in Section 2.3, in polar questions *poi* contributes a presuppositional meaning that is associated with a request for a confirmation. It thus acts as an illocutionary modifier scoping at the level of the speech act. The speaker’s stance and, in particular, the speaker’s epistemic status can also result from the interrogative use of *poi*, expressing concern or interest or strengthening the epistemic uncertainty with respect to the possibility of finding an answer to the questions (cf. § 2.3).

The boundaries of the functions of *poi* become clear if we look at their respective scope. We are aware that a number of different labels have been used in the literature to refer to those elements marking discourse and pragmatic functions. We nevertheless want to propose our classification of the functions of *poi* based on their scope properties, as in Table 1:

Table 1: The functions of *poi* and their scope

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific functions</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>poi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) temporal succession logical sequence</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>CONNECTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) demarcation topic/argument shift new sub-argument</td>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>DISCOURSE MARKER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) contrastive conclusive rejection/attenuation of a previous claim (counter-expectational)</td>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) dissent (counter-expectation) concern/interest epistemic uncertainty</td>
<td>Proposition Speech act</td>
<td>MODAL PARTICLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) presuppositional</td>
<td>Speech act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From a functional and pragmatic viewpoint, the distinction between functions (fa) and (fb) is not uncontroversial, but our classification is based on the scope features: connective *poi* operates over specific utterances creating connections and relations on the basis of their textually-expressed propositional content, while *poi* as a discourse marker encompasses sequences of utterances and larger chunks of discourse. In the latter use, *poi* involves strategies of discourse management, marking the progression of the argument in the discourse (fb) or the relations between the current utterance and the previous discourse (fc).

We consider the scope over the proposition and the speech act as a characteristic that identifies a distinct class of markers, namely pragmatic markers. Pragmatic markers provide (inter-)subjective specifications of the proposition and/or the speech act which are not textually expressed, but which can be treated as constant and given semantic correlates. With respect to these functions (d,e), however, and in line with previous analyses (Coniglio 2008, Cardinaletti 2011), we analyse *poi* as a modal particle. In our view, modal particles constitute a subclass of pragmatic markers which are distinguished from the larger group by their categorial status and internal structure (see also Diewald 1997, 2006 on a similar distinction between discourse markers and (German) modal particles).

4. THE SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION OF *POI*: SOME FINAL REMARKS

In Section 2, we identified the syntactic positions in which *poi* occurs, and tried to establish some correlations between these positions and its functions. As a temporal adverb *poi* occupies the specifier of the projection T(posterior), thus appearing in a final, postverbal position. As a

---

8 See Ghezzi (2014: 15) for a similar distinction, which is however based on a broader array of elements and functions.
temporal and logical connective it tends to occur in an initial position, which we have identified with the syntactic projections specialized for Scene-Setting functions. By contrast, modal particle *poī* typically occurs in the Mood/Mod Field. In (19) we illustrate the correlations between the macrofunctions of *poī* (connective, discourse marker, modal particle) based on the scope distinctions discussed in Section 3, and its syntactic distribution:

\[
(19) \quad [CP \quad [\quad \text{Scene-Setting} \quad [IP \quad \text{Mood/ModField} \quad [\quad T_{(\text{posterior})} \quad [\text{VP}]]]]] \\
\quad \{\text{connective}\} \quad \{\text{modal particle}\} \quad \{\text{temporal adverb}\} \\
\quad \{\text{discourse marker}\} \quad \{\text{discourse marker}\} \quad \{\text{discourse marker}\}
\]

The mapping between syntactic positions and meanings appears to be more direct in the case of the temporal (both connective and non-connective) function, as well as when *poī* acts as a modal particle. The discourse functions, however, are less predictable on the basis of their syntactic distribution alone. While a speaker is able to grasp the temporal and the modal functions of *poī* independently from the text or the context, the same is not possible when a discourse function is associated with *poī*, which can only be inferred in a particular argumentative and discourse context. As is typical of discourse markers, moreover, *poī* neither contributes to the proposition of its host sentence nor modifies the (temporal) localization of the event denoted by the statement. It can thus be omitted with no significant consequences for the interpretation at the descriptive sentence level.

On the whole, we can draw the following generalization: the IP-internal positions are related to (inter-)subjective meanings, which may either add up to the discourse functions or may characterize *poī* as a modal particle, scoping over the proposition or the speech act and expressing speaker’s stance and information state. As a modal particle *poī* occurs clause-internally in the higher portion of IP, sitting in the Mood/Mod field.\(^9\) In the case of discourse makers, we then have to assume that the relationship between syntactic position and meaning is conditioned by extra-sentential conditions, and that the interpretation must be mediated by the discourse context. This analysis confirms the view according to which discourse markers “concern the structure or form of discourse” while “modal particles are highly content-dependent and have a scope which is conventionally fixed” (Waltereit & Detges 2007: 63).

References

---

\(^9\) Despite its IP-internal position, modal particle *poī* needs to interact with the CP where properties related to clause type and illocutionary force are encoded. See Zimmermann (2004) and Coniglio (2011) for implementation of this idea. See also Coniglio (2008) and Cardinaletti (2011) for the precise distribution of *poī* within the Mood/Mod field with respect to other types of adverbs.


