# DP-internal discourse particles, illocutionary force, and specificity

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**Summary** In this paper, we provide a split-DP analysis for the occurrence of German discourse particles inside the nominal domain. We account for the interaction between the functional make-up of the DP, the presence of discourse particles, and specificity. Our approach also sheds light on parallels between the sentential and nominal domain regarding their information structural and illocutionary properties.

**Discourse particles and Force** Discourse particles, e.g. German *denn* (lit. 'then') or *bloß* (lit. 'only'), are geared to certain clause types (declarative, polar interrogative, *wh*-interrogative, exclamative, imperative etc.) and arise mainly in root clauses, where they are invariably stuck in a pre-VP/*v*P position. They make a semantic contribution by co-determining the illocutionary force of an utterance.

(1)  $[_{\text{ForceP/FinP}}$ Force°/Fin° $[_{\text{(TopP)}} \dots [\textbf{Prt°} \text{(AdvP*)} [_{\text{VP/}v\text{P}} \dots]]]]]$

Although particles are sensitive to sentence types and utterance contexts, they can appear at an arbitrary distance from Force°. In contrast to approaches assuming LF-movement of the particle (or feature movement), Bayer and Obenauer (2011) demonstrate how discourse particles obtain access to the force system of the clause by virtue of probe-goal agreement.

**DP-internal discourse particles** Certain particles, e.g. *wohl* (lit. 'well') or *ja* (lit. 'yes'), can occur within complex DPs.

(2)  *Gestern    habe ich* [ *meinen ja    schwerkranken  Nachbarn*] *getroffen.*
     Yesterday have I    my    JA   seriously.sick  neighbor   met
     'Yesterday, I met my seriously sick neighbor.'

In (2), the particle *ja* does not take scope over the VP/*v*P of the clause. Rather, the particle only scopes over a propositional part expressed within the DP. That is, by adding *ja* to the utterance, the speaker indicates that he thinks that at the time of utterance he needs to make salient the uncontroversial fact that his neighbor is very sick (the propositional content *p* expressed within the DP). Crucially, the speaker does not indicate that he thinks that it is uncontroversial that he has met his neighbor. Note further that *ja* can also be used when the DP is part of an interrogative (3a), although it is a well-known observation that *ja*, as a particle scoping over VP/*v*P, cannot occur in interrogative clauses (3b).

(3)  a.  *Warum hat* [$_{\text{DP}}$ *dieser ja  schwerkranke Mann*]  *keine Jacke an?*
         Why  has    this JA seriously.sick man   no   jacket on
         'Why does this seriously sick man not wear a jacket?'
     b. *\*Warum hat dieser schwerkranke Mann ja keine Jacke an?*

Importantly, discourse particles can only occur in DPs where the adjective, according to many approaches (e.g. Kayne 1994: ch. 8), originates in the predicate position of a reduced relative clause which is itself a complement of D. In other words, discourse particles are not licensed in constructions containing non-intersective adjectives (direct modification adjectives according to Cinque 2010; cf. *\*diese ja angebliche Krankheit* – 'this JA alleged sickness').

**DP-internal discourse particles and specificity** As for relative clauses, discourse particles cannot be found in clauses with a restrictive interpretation (4a), whereas they are possible in appositive ones (4b). However, adopting a more fine-grained typology of relative clauses (Wiltschko 2013), we notice that discourse particles can also occur in relative clauses that rely on unique or generic reference and, at the same time, cannot be analyzed as appositive relative clauses (4c).

(4)  a.  (Zimmermann 2004: 284)
         *\*Die Firma sucht     einen Angestellten, der ja immer pünktlich ist.*
         The firm  looks-for an    employee    who JA always punctual is
         'The firm is looking for an employee who is always punctual.'

b. (Thurmair 1989: 80)
*Autos, die ja laut sind, sollten* […]
cars which JA loud are should
'Cars, which are loud, should […]' (= All cars are generally loud.)

c. *Mit Herrn K. bekommt die Firma einen Angestellten, der ja immer pünktlich ist.*
With Mr. K. gets the firm an employee who JA always punctual is
'With Mr. K, the firm gets an employee who is always punctual.'

The denotation of specific referents seems to be a major licensing criterion for DP-internal discourse particles. We searched the DWDS corpus ('Digital Dictionary of the German Language', cf. Klein and Geyken 2010) for the occurrence of such structures and found that only 5.8% of all relevant findings were indefinite DPs, most of which are preceded in the discourse by a unique or generic entity, as demonstrated by the original corpus example in (5), contextually referring to 'Jazz'.

(5) *eine ja nicht immer einfache Musik*
a JA not always easy music
'a music which is not always easy'
(*Die Zeit*, 27.01.2006; http://www.zeit.de/online/2006/20/alpenjazz, 13.12.2013)

**DP-internal discourse particles and Force** We claim that the predicational structure expressed within the DP should be situated in a functional structure comparable to the one required by discourse particles at the level of CP. We assume that the particle is invariably stuck in a particle-specific position (cf. (1) above). Notice now that material can intervene between D and Prt, as shown in (6b).

(6) a. *dieser ja im letzten Jahr schwerkranke Mann*
this JA in.the last year seriously.sick man
b. *dieser im letzten Jahr ja schwerkranke Mann*

We demonstrate information structural differences between (6a) and (6b), and we argue that, analogous to the situation in CPs, constituents can move from within the lexical layer across the particle to an information structural Ā-position, labelled TopP in (7).

(7) [$_{AP}$ [$_{TopP}$ [ *im letzten Jahr*]$_i$ [$_{PrtP}$*ja* [$_{lexical\ layer}$ t$_i$ [$_A$ *schwerkrank* ]]]]]
in.the last year JA seriously.sick

With regard to the head noun and Agreement morphology, the AP thus derived may enter the derivation of the DP in the same way as simple APs. As mentioned above, discourse particles within AP are sensitive to different referential modes expressed in the D position just as discourse particles at the level of CP are sensitive to the Force of the clause. Since the referential mode of D is independent of the discourse particle, but reference-sensitive Prts are likely to have a feature related to reference, we adopt the feature-sharing version of Agree formulated by Pesetsky and Torrego (2007) to account for the connection between D and Prt. As for the Force domain at the level of CP, DP-internal discourse particles do not depend on a particular sentence type at the level of CP, but their interpretive impact nevertheless connects to the speaker of the utterance. We therefore suggest that DP-internal discourse particles in German provide further evidence for splitting Force into a 'clause-typing' domain and a 'speaker attitude' projection that encodes the speaker's relation to propositional contents of the utterance (Haegeman 2010).

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