From Modal Particle to Interrogative Marker: A Study of German *denn*

JOSEF BAYER

1. INTRODUCTION

The German particle *denn* (from Old High German temporal *thanne*, “then,” and related to Engl. *then* and German *dann*, “then”) is either a conjunctive or a so-called “modal particle” (MP), also known as “discourse particle.” Only the latter use will be of interest here. *Denn* as an MP is in its core occurrences confined to root V1-questions and V2 wh-questions. Its occurrence in clauses of that type is optional. It signals that the speaker is in a particular way concerned about the answer that his or her question will elicit. An analysis will be offered according to which *denn* is a functional head that heads a particle phrase that is in construction with the CP’s layer of illocutionary force. The Bavarian dialect that will be in the focus of the final part of this article does not employ the lexical element *denn* but rather the clitic form *-n* (which appears to be related to *denn*). This clitic element is interesting as it combines two remarkable properties that distinguish it from *denn*. The article is organized as follows: Section 1 explains the discourse function of *denn*. Section 2 develops the syntax of *denn*. Section 3 turns to the role of *denn* in Bavarian where it has turned into a clitic element. A conclusion is given in section 4.
2. THE DISCOURSE RELEVANCE OF GERMAN DENN

In its function as an MP, the German particle denn occurs in root questions as in (1) and (2) where it gives rise to an attitude of wondering and being concerned on the side of the speaker.

1. Disjunctive question (V1)
Hat dich denn Dr. Schreck angerufen?
has you PRT Dr. Schreck called
'Did Dr. Schreck call you? (I am wondering)'

2. Constituent question (V2)
Wer hat dich denn angerufen?
who has you PRT telephoned
'Who called you? (I am wondering)'

MPs like denn have "expressive" rather than "descriptive" meaning. König (1977), Wegener (2002) and Grosz (2005) emphasize the addressee’s knowledge to which denn signals a relation. According to König and Wegener, denn is inappropriate if the question opens a discourse out of the blue. The deeper reason for this may, however, be that there is no common knowledge background to which a true answer could relate. For instance, an administration officer whose sole job is to write down a citizen’s address can hardly felicitously ask Wo wohnen Sie denn?" (Where do you live, I am wondering?). The officer is not concerned as there is no (or perhaps too weak a) common ground that could be updated by a true answer to these questions. Let me propose the pragmatic condition in (3).

3. [denn a] is appropriate in a context c if (i) a is a question and (ii) the expected true answer p updates the common knowledge K of speaker and addressee in such a way that p is relevant to the knowledge K of the speaker.

The relevance requirement implies that the speaker is CONCERNED about the answer as it relates to his/her contextually given knowledge in a way that matters for him/her in one way or another. In the syntactic account of denn to follow in section 2, I will encode the anaphoric link that denn supplies a question with by means of the feature [Conc] for "concern". (2) predicts that denn is confined to root clauses because only root clauses make indexical reference to the speaker via the highest layer of the split-CP domain that is known as the force projection. We shall see whether this prediction has to be modified or not.

The context dependency of denn which is captured in (3) agrees well with Behaghel’s (1928-1928) observation – referred to by Dittmann (1980) and Wegener (2002) – that denn has an anaphoric meaning due to its origin from OHG thanne. Thanne refers to previously mentioned or situationaly recovered circumstances as seen in the following example.

4. Thanne pistflu dielor, war nimanist thu thanne watsth
the well is much deeper where you then over the
wasar flizzontas [Otfried II, 14, 29f.]
water running
'the well is very deep, so where will you then take running water?'

Although the current use of denn does in many cases not allow an anaphoric interpretation as concrete as thanne, there seems to be an abstract residue of this usage by which the speaker signals that the question is situationaly anchored in what he/she takes to be the situationaly given common ground.

As the contrast between (5a) and (5b) shows, denn may arise in an embedded clause with root Interpretation due to a selecting verbum dicendi but not in a propositional attitude context as in (5b).

5. a. Christine Christine
fragte, asked warum why
der Klaus der Klaus denn PRT denn so blass ist
so pale is
b. "Christine Christine
weiß, knows warum why
der Klaus der Klaus PRT
do blass so pale
ist is

1. Expressive meaning is that part of meaning which informs about the actual utterance situation (in contrast to the truth conditions). MPs fall in the domain of "expressives", cf. Kratzer (1999, 2004), Grosz (2005) and further references provided there.

2. König's example: A wakes up his wife and asks Wie spät ist es denn? (How late is it DENN?) According to him it is inappropriate because the addressee lacks a context in which to interpret the question. It is appropriate if the wife asks A the same question because A can be supposed to have a context that specifies the actual time.

3. One may object that denn may also appear in non-information-seeking interrogatives, e.g.
In (5a), the attitude of wondering/being concerned is, of course, ascribed to Christine and not to the speaker.4

3. THE SYNTAX OF DENN

In this section it will be shown that denn precedes high discourse oriented adverbs and also occupies the highest position in the hierarchy of MPs. We will then provide arguments for the place of denn in clause structure. Finally, cases will be considered in which denn, contrary to expectation, does appear in embedded clauses in the scope of a propositional attitude verb.

3.1 Hierarchy

Following the lead of Cinque (1999) for the ordering of adverbs, one can show that denn precedes the adverbs which figure as the highest in Cinque’s hierarchy.5 For instance, schließlich (finally), zum Glück (fortunately), and schlauerweise (intelligently), dummerweise (stupidly) belong to the higher adverbs. As the following examples show, they can never precede denn.

(6) a. Bist du denn schließlich ans Ziel gekommen?
   are you PRT finally at-the goal come
   ‘Did you finally reach the goal? (I am wondering)’
   b. *Bist du schließlich denn ans Ziel gekommen?

(7) a. Hat der Hans denn schlauerweise die Heizung zurückgeschaltet?
   has the Hans PRT cleverly the heating back-switched
   ‘Did Hans cleverly reduce the heating? (I am wondering)’
   b. *Hat der Hans schlauerweise denn die Heizung zurückgeschaltet?

(8) a. Wer ist denn schließlich ans Ziel gekommen?
   who is PRT finally at-the goal come
   ‘Who reached the goal finally? (I am wondering)’
   b. *Wer ist schließlich denn ans Ziel gekommen?

(9) a. Wer hat sich denn zum Glück gemeldet?
   who is REF PRT to-the luck respond
   ‘Who has luckily responded? (I am wondering)’
   b. *Wer hat sich zum Glück denn gemeldet?

5. Cf. Doherty (1985: 76f.). Doherty argues that denn cannot be used in self-directed questions because it relates to the attitude of an interlocutor. I disagree with her intuition. Monological questions such as

(10) a. Wo habe ich denn meine Brille hingelegt?
    where have I PRT my glasses put
    ‘Where did I put my glasses? (I am wondering)’

are perfectly normal. (3) is compatible with such a case because speaker and addressee may happen to be identical.


An exception to which we will turn shortly seem to be adverbs of time and space such as gestern (yesterday), heute (today), damals (in those days), hier (here), dort (there) etc.

(10) hat mich denn jemand anrufen wollen?
    has me PRT someone call wanted
    ‘Did someone want to call me yesterday? (I am wondering)’

As Thurmair (1989), Abraham (2000), Coniglio (2005; 2009) and Grosz (2005) show, MPs are hierarchically ordered, similarly to the order of adverbs that has been studied by Cinque. In (11) I confine myself to disjunctive questions.

(11) a. Hast du denn schon was gegessen?
   have you PRT already something eaten
   (*eigentlich < denn)
   ‘Have you already something eaten? (I am wondering)’
   b. Könnte er denn vielleicht in Rom sein?
   could he PRT perhaps in Rome be
   (*vielleicht < denn)
   c. Hat du denn etwa wieder Kopfschmerzen?
   have you PRT about again headache
   ‘Have you again a headache? (I am wondering)’
   d. Seid ihr denn auch nach Ceurle gefahren?
   did you PRT also to Ceurle drive
   (*auch < denn)

The MPs which figure in constituent questions are partially different but it is equally true that denn precedes all of them. As Coniglio (2005: 110f.) points out, the lower MPs can precede high adverbs such as vermutlich (presumably) but can also appear in interspersed position as long as their intrinsic order is retained. With respect to denn, this yields roughly the hierarchy in (12), where we refer to the complementary class of MPs with the ad hoc feature [-denn].

(12) The position of denn in the hierarchy of MPs and adverbs
    (ADV_adjacent) > denn > MP_denn > ADV > MP

3.2 Clause structure

There is controversy about the X-status of MPs to which I cannot do justice here for reasons of space.6 Tests of leftward/rightward movement, (non-) projection, coordination, focusing etc. suggest that MPs are functional heads. Various researchers nevertheless...

7. Cf. Grosz (2005: 2.4.3) for further discussion. For the positioning of strong and weak pronouns, cf. section 2.2 below.

argue that MPs are XPs in the specifier of an empty head, albeit "degenerate" XPs. A complicating factor is that MPs do not have totally homogeneous syntactic properties. For instance, de.nn, unlike other MPs, can turn into a clitic (see section 3). It has also been argued that MPs cannot be heads because these heads would inhibit V-movement to the C/Fin'-position due to the Head Movement Constraint. This argument, which applies equally to negation is, of course, theory dependent. Empirically it appears to be problematic to deny head status to the standard negator nicht which in dialects with negative concord appears to be a head into whose specifier a negative quantifier has to move in order to check off its neg-feature.3 Negotation does not interfere with V-to-C movement. It seems to be feasible to modify Relativized Minimality in such a way that the verb (or rather, its fin-feature) will skip certain medial head positions.10 On the basis of novel data that cannot be reproduced here, Bayer and Oehnauer (in press) argue that de.nn and other MPs in questions must be analyzed as functional heads which projects a particle clause (PrtP) by taking VP or its "extension" (VPex) where VPex may be MoodP, ModP, AspP in Cinque’s sense, or another PrtP.

(13) [parl. [parl. de.nn] VPexe]\n
The space between de.nn and the raised finite verb (which I take to head a FinP) can remain empty or can be filled by topical constituents which embrace the sentence topic (what the sentence is "about") but also discourse referents which have been established by previous discourse.

(14) a. *Der Hans den Hund gefüttert?\n    has DENN the Hans the dog fed
    ‘Did Hans feed the dog?”

b. Hat der Hans den Hund gefüttert?

c. *Hat der Hans den Hund den Hans den Hund gefüttert?

Since adverbs of time and space, so-called "stage setting" adverbs, are potential topics, while mood-, mod-, asp-adverbs are generally not, we understand the distribution of the data in (10) and (11).11 NPs and DPs which do not qualify as topics – thematic indefinites and quantifiers – are excluded from the topic field.

9. Cf. Bavarian

(10) Er hod [parl. leen Schneid] [parl. red leen Schneid g’tabl]\n    he had his courage not had
    ‘He was not courageous’

10. Groez (2005) argues that German MPs must be in a spec-position in order to allow the verb to move via the empty head position. His proposal follows one of Cinque’s (1989) motivations to suggest such an architecture for adverbs. The argument overlooks the important fact that in Italian the verb (in fact the particle) can land in intermediate positions while nothing of that sort can be observed in German.


12. One reviewer suspects that clitic and weak pronouns cannot be topics because they cannot freely move to SpecFinP (the "Vorfeld"). In my view, these constraints are not needed. Relevant discussion can be found in Frey TopP of (17) and then attaching to Fin’.

13. The idea that V-fin raising triggers force goes back to Wechsler’s (1991) analysis in German.
The particle *denn* introduces next to [uQForce] the lexical feature [Conc]. Consider the simplest case (18) in which the force head probes *denn*,\(^{14}\)

\[
(18) \quad \text{a. } \{\text{[real/rend] } \cdot \text{ Fin'/Force'} \}_{\text{[Conc]}} \{\text{[real] } \text{ denn} \}_{\text{[Conc]}} \{\text{[real] } \cdot \text{ Fin'/Force'} \}_{\text{[Conc]}} \{\text{[real] } \cdot \text{ Fin'/Force'} \}_{\text{[Conc]}} \{\text{[real] } \cdot \text{ Fin'/Force'} \}_{\text{[Conc]}}
\]

b. \{\text{[real/rend] } \cdot \text{ Fin'/Force'} \}_{\text{[Conc]}} \{\text{[real] } \text{ denn} \}_{\text{[Conc]}} \{\text{[real] } \cdot \text{ Fin'/Force'} \}_{\text{[Conc]}} \{\text{[real] } \cdot \text{ Fin'/Force'} \}_{\text{[Conc]}} \{\text{[real] } \cdot \text{ Fin'/Force'} \}_{\text{[Conc]}}
\]

Although [Conc] enters a chain headed by [Force], it is not moved to [Force] as has been suggested in previous accounts.\(^{15}\) As argued in Bayer and Obenauer (in press), a pre-VP MP does not change its surface scope in the course of the derivation. The MP becomes part of the left clausal periphery by virtue of being in a probe goal relation with [Force]. The mechanism does not move the particle. We will see in section 5 that such movement would yield an undesirable result.

### 3.3 Distant *denn*

We have so far assumed that *denn* appears exclusively in the root clause or in dependent quasi root clauses as in (5a). As the following data from the internet (to which structural information about wh-extraction has been added) show, this assumption must be modified.

\[
(19) \quad \text{a. Wie denkst du, dass es denn wie weitergehen soll mit euch?}
\]

How do you think that the two of you should carry on? (I'm wondering) [http://mein-kummerkasten.de/42829/frendgehen.html]

b. Welches Bild glaubst du dass er denn welches Bild von mir haben könnte? (http://www.maravensus.de/search.php?search_author=Lolaandsaid=06a3eaf60cfe8c76e00e17e7368b51f)

As the following equally grammatical examples show, neither depth of embedding nor the exact placement of *denn* seems to play a role as long as cyclic wh-movement passes *denn*.

\[
(20) \quad \text{a. Wohin glaubst du denn, wohin dass der Hans wohin gefahren ist?}
\]

Where do you believe that Hans went?

b. Wohin glaubst du denn, wohin dass der Hans wohin gefahren ist?

c. Wohin glaubst du denn, wohin dass Paula meint, dass der Hans

d. Wohin glaubst du, wohin dass Paula meint, dass der Hans

denn gefahren ist?

denn gefahren ist?

Putting aside embedded interrogative clauses with quasi root properties such as (5a),\(^{10}\) The *denn* is illicit in clauses from which the wh-phrase cannot have been raised.\(^{16}\) The following examples show that *denn* cannot raise from islands.

(21) Relative-clause island

Wer kennt (denn) eine nette Frau, die dem Hans ("denn") helfen könnte?

Who knows a nice lady who the Hans help could

(22) Adjunct island

Warum ist (denn) der Hans, ohne ("denn") einen Führerschein zu haben,

why is [denn] the Hans without [denn] a driver's license to have

Auto gefahren?

car driven

'Why did Hans drive a car without having a driver's license?'

(23) Complex MP-Constraint

Wer hat (denn) die Behauptung, dass Hans ("denn") Bankrott sei, aufgestellt?

Who has [denn] the statement that the Hans bankrupt is made

who has [denn] the statement that the Hans was bankrupt?

One could argue that due to subjacency *denn* cannot undergo classical LF-style raising. However, dependent clauses from which movement is potentially possible are equally out as long as no wh-phrase passes through the minimal clause which hosts *denn*.

(24) a. Wer hat dir (denn) erzählt, dass der Hans ("denn") weggefahren ist?

Who told you that the Hans left is

b. Habe ich den (denn) schon erzählt, dass der Hans ("denn")

have I [denn] already told that the Hans left has

weggefahren ist?

rove is?

(16) To be precise, it is not wh-movement as such but rather the general class of mechanisms by which the scope of the embedded clause can be extended to the root clause. The following example of partial movement yielded perfect acceptability in a judgment test with 20 speakers.

(6) Was glaubst du, wohin der Hans denn gefahren ist?

Where do you believe that Hans went?

14. Unlike in standard minimalism, it is not assumed here that the uninterpretable feature is exclusively associated with the probe. For details about the feature matching account behind this proposal see Pesetsky and Torrego (2007) and the use of their system in Bayer and Obenauer (in press).

15. In his description of the German MP wohll (‘well’) Zimmermann (2004; 2008) proposed that the MP moves to the left periphery at LF. See also a previous version of the current chapter that was temporarily available on LingBuzz.

16. To be precise, it is not wh-movement as such but rather the general class of mechanisms by which the scope of the embedded clause can be extended to the root clause. The following example of partial movement yielded perfect acceptability in a judgment test with 20 speakers.

(6) Was glaubst du, wohin der Hans denn gefahren ist?

Where do you believe that Hans went?
Denn may physically remain in a domain lower than the one in which it can be interpreted by virtue of a wh-phrase that links its feature [Conc] to the force projection.\(^9\) Denn must enter a local agree relation with the C-head associated with the wh-phrase. This C may be [QForce] as in (5a) but it may also be [uQForce] as in the examples above in which the dependent clause containing denn is in the scope of a verb that does not tolerate an interrogative complement. In the latter case, the features of denn, [uQForce, iConc], undergo partial agreement with the C-head’s feature [uQForce].\(^{10}\) As a result, the MP’s uninterpretable feature is valued. This process can continue until it is terminated by [QForce], which is normally associated with the head Fin’/Force\(^\circ\). The derivation runs as shown in (25).

\[(25)\]
\[
\text{[wh \{C\}_{uQForce} \ldots \{wh \ldots \}]]
\]

(25a) [\{wh \{C\}_{uQForce} \ldots \{wh \ldots \}]]

(25b) [\{wh \{C\}_{uQForce} \ldots \{wh \ldots \}]]

(25c) [\{wh \{C\}_{uQForce} \ldots \{wh \ldots \}]]

(25d) [\{wh \{C\}_{uQForce} \ldots \{wh \ldots \}]]

(25e) [\{wh \{C\}_{uQForce} \ldots \{wh \ldots \}]]

Thanks to its question-sensitive feature [uQForce] and cyclic wh-movement, the particle denn is able to contribute pragmatically to the illocutionary force of the utterance “long distance”. Cases like (25d) – *Wohin glaubst du, dass Paula denn meint, dass der Hans gefahren ist?* – follow because wh can so to say “pick up” the feature [Conc] on its way in passing the particle with which it undergoes partial agreement. Although denn does not raise to the matrix Fin’/Force, the effect is that Fin’/Force associates with it at a distance. As a result, denn contributes compositionally to the interrogative force of the matrix clause.

Although there is not enough space here to extend the range of related data, it should be noticed that German offers a more marked construction in which wh-movement pied-pipes the MP along. Given that German obeys the V2-constraint, denn in (26) must have formed a constituent with the focalized wh-phrase *wohin* which moves it outwards “piggyback”\(^{11}\).

\[(26)\]
\[
\text{[WOHIN denn] glaubst du, dass der Hans gefahren ist?}
\]

There are good reasons not to derive such cases from the base seen in (17) in which MP takes a pre-VP scope position. Nevertheless, (26) provides an intuitive insight in the association of wh with MP.

17. An interesting earlier proposal in this direction can be found in Hasegawa’s (1999) work on exclamatives.
18. While this is impossible in standard minimalist accounts, it is possible in the feature matching account which is assumed here following Pesetsky and Torrego (2007).
19. For detailed discussion and an account of this alternative derivation cf. Bayer and Obenauer (in press).

As already said in note 16, the question sensitive MP can also remain distant from the root clause in partial movement constructions as seen in (27).

\[(27)\]
\[
\text{Was glaubst du, wohin der Hans denn gefahren ist?}
\]

(27) *Was glaubst du, wohin der Hans denn gefahren ist?*

*Where do you believe that Hans went?*

Probes/goal agreement in the lower CP-phase works as in (25a,b). The difference is that the lower wh-phrase does not move on but is in an agreement/valuation relation with the neutral wh-element *was*. A natural extension of the movement analysis in (25) would be to say that was deletes the feature [uQForce] of the embedded CP but leaves the feature [Conc] of denn intact so as to make it contribute to the illocutionary force of the root clause.

After this sketch of the syntax of the German MP denn, let us in the final part consider its role in the Bavarian dialect.

4. DENN IN BAVARIAN

In the Bavarian variety to be discussed now, denn does not exist as a full form, but it exists as the enclitic element -n.\(^{20}\) Bavarian is a language with Wackernagel-style cliticization to Fin’ or C’. In agreement with our analysis of Standard German in (17), topical pronouns cliticized to Fin’/C’ before -n cliticizes to the clitic complex.

\[(28)\]
\[
\text{Wann hod-a s-n da zogt?}
\]

(28) *Wann hod-a s-n da zogt?*

*When did he show it to you?*

In spite of acceptable phonotactics, permutations as in *Wann hod-a s-n da zogt?*, *Wann hod-a s-n da zogt?* etc. are ungrammatical. N-cliticization turns the particle into part of the Fin’/Force-head. The wh-phrase that moves to its specifier can therefore be argued to appear in a spec-head configuration with the particle. The distant placement of denn that was discussed in 2.3 is absent in Bavarian; -n can target only Fin’/Force. However -n is at variance with denn also in two other respects: (A) it is OBLIGATORY in wh-questions. Weiß (2002) provides the following example.

\[(29)\]
\[
\text{Was hod’ -(n) g’sogd?}
\]

(29) *Was hod’ -(n) g’sogd?*

*What have-you -N said*

*What did you say?*

20. The dialect to be described here is my own, spoken in Dietfurt/Altmüh, a Middle to North-Eastern Bavarian variety. Native speakers linguists from more eastern varieties largely agree with the judgments to follow.
is directly felt: (32a) is fully acceptable although -n is lacking, and (32b) is semantically distinct from (32a). 21

(32) a. *Horn d'au tay a Haus?
    have they also a house
    'Do they also have a house?'

b. *Horn-n d'au tay a Haus?
    have N they also a house
    'Do they also have a house? (I am wondering)'

Both the full form and the clitic form have the same situations which, of course, gives again rise to redundancy if both are merged, but now for the trivial reason of repetition.

(33) *Horn-n d'au tay a Haus?
    have N they also a house

5. CONCLUSION

The preceding study of the German MP denn has revealed a number of intricate syntactic properties which suggest that the study of MPs can enhance our understanding of clause structure. MPs are part of a highly articulated functional structure which systematically contributes to the illocutionary force of an utterance. In this architecture, denn projects a particle phrase that is in an agreement relation with an interrogative Fin/Force head of German V1/V2 clauses. We have made precise under which conditions denn may enter this functional structure even if it appears in a position below the root clause. Given that the complement of a believe type verb as in (19) and (20) does not project interrogative force (and perhaps lacks force altogether), distant denn must be in an agreement relation with the root which is established as a result of cyclic wh-movement.

In Bavarian, denn appears as the clitic element -n which in wh-questions is deprived of its special MP-semantics and operates more or less like a pure wh-interrogative marker. Abraham (1991) identified in the history of German a grammaticalization path of denn as in (34).

23. Cf. Planting (1989: 659), Poletto (2000: ch.3) and Hack (2009) on the particle pa (derived from Latin post) in Northern Italian dialects. It is fascinating to see close correspondences between Bavarian -n and pa in varieties of Rethoromanic. First, there is a lexical correspondence between pa (-Lat. post) and Bavarian nacher ("after"). Secondly, pa has no corresponding sense between pa (-Lat. post) and Bavarian nacher ("after"). According to Hack (2009) – becomes obligatory in wh-questions in Badiot, Marce and in Gerhardina, with a concomitant loss of its original meaning. She ascribes this to a process of grammaticalization. In Gerhardina, the grammaticalization of pa is more advanced than in the other dialects as pa is obligatory in all questions, i.e. also in disjunctive questions.

I do not know if there are any dialects of Bavarian with obligatory -n in all questions.

21. The underlying form of 1st/3rd person plural horn ("have") is as in Standard German haben. If -n clitics before haben reduces to horn, haben + n yields habenen due to vocalic ephphenesis. Reduction, in conjunction with syllabification and onset maximization, then yields the unambiguous bisyllabic form horn.nen.

22. As pointed out in Bayer (2010), the Bavarian dialect described here allows wh-drop of the pronoun was ("what"). The option of wh-drop is arguably related to the presence of the clitic -n.
The Bavarian data discussed in section 3 show that this grammaticalization path is prolonged due to further reduction of denn toward a pure marker of root wh-questions.

The concomitant cline from XP to a lexical X, to a functional X and finally to a clitic element echoes a familiar diachronic process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research presented here was carried out during my 2007/2008 sabbatical at the Universität Ca' Foscari, Venice whose hospitality was extremely helpful. Parts have been presented in talks in Berlin, Brussels, Konstanz, Paris, Salzburg and Venice. I profited from discussions with Hans Altmann, Markus Bader, Ellen Brandner, Anna Cardinaletti, Guglielmo Cinque, Marco Coniglio, Franziska Hack, Agnes Kolmer, Hans-Georg Obenauer, Cecilia Poletto, Helmut Weiß, and from comments by five reviewers. None of them should be held responsible for remaining deficits. Thanks to Marco Veser for editorial help. My research was supported by a grant of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft within the Konstanz SFB 471.

REFERENCES


Abraham, Werner (2000), Modal particles in German: Word classification and legacy beyond grammaticalisation in Approaches to the typology of word classes, P. Vogel and B. Comrie (Eds.), 321–350. Berlin: de Gruyter.


Bayer, Josef and Obenauer, Hans-Georg (in press), Discourse particles, clause structure, and question types. The Linguistic Review.


Lexical Complementizers and Headless Relatives

PAOLA BENINCA

1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper I will concentrate on a specific aspect of headless relatives as they appear in contemporary and earlier varieties of Italo-Romance—as well as in earlier varieties of English—namely the presence of a lexical complementizer adjacent to the wh pronoun. I will localize both the wh and the complementizer in the functional structure of the left periphery, and show that their position is distinct from that of wh and complementizer in dependent interrogatives, as they appear in many dialects of Northern Italy. This descriptive conclusion permits us to obtain a finer analysis of headless relatives and their relation to dependent interrogatives. Due to space limitations, I will only touch upon other aspects of these constructions.¹

¹ I am deeply grateful to Guglielmo Cinque, Mair Parry, Christina Tortora, and the anonymous reviewer, who carefully read the paper and provided valuable observations. Thanks to Mariachiara Berizzi and Silvia Rossi, who helped me with Old and Middle English examples, providing interesting data and suggestions.

1. Headless relatives have important links with other constructions, other kinds of relatives, and other structures that involve wh movement. For example, de Vries (2006) convincingly shows that appositive relatives differ from restrictives in being coordinated to a complete DP, and not a complement of D; as a consequence, the appositive type he considers (Cinque 2008 provides a more complex set of sub-types of this class of relatives) has the structure of a headless relative. On the other hand, in an early study on relatives, Hull and Koenan (1973) pointed out that headless relatives in the languages of the world share structural and semantic features with interrogatives.