DP-internal discourse particles, expressive content, and illocutionary force

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Abstract. In this paper, I investigate the DP-internal occurrence of discourse particles in German. I first demonstrate what kind of attributive configurations license the presence of discourse particles inside the DP domain. Given this demonstration, I sketch a fine-grained syntactic representation of DP-internal particles, and I point out parallels to the functional make-up of CPs.

Keywords. discourse particles; DP syntax; information structure; expressive dimension; illocutionary force

1. Introduction

Discourse particles are richly attested in Germanic, Slavic, and South East Asian languages (Bayer & Obenauer 2011; Biberauer, Haegeman & van Kemenade 2014). It is controversial whether discourse particles are functionally and/or lexically articulated in Romance (cf. Cardinaletti 2011, to appear; Manzini to appear). At the level of pragmatics, discourse particles organize the discourse by conveying the epistemic states of both the speaker and the hearer (cf. Zimmermann 2011). Given that, in formal syntax, the organization of the discourse is encoded in the CP domain of the clause (Rizzi 2014), it is an interesting observation that certain German discourse particles, e.g. wohl (lit. ‘well’) or ja (lit. ‘yes’), can occur within complex DPs, as shown in (1).1

(1) a. *dieser ja leider viel zu früh
   this JA unfortunately much too soon
   verstorbene Komponist
   departed composer

   (Thurmair 1989: 27)

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1 It is unclear whether this is an idiosyncratic property of German. Other languages that have a rich inventory of discourse particles, for instance Bangla, do not license DP-internal discourse particles (Josef Bayer, Rajat Ghosh p.c.). However, Coniglio (2011: 82) gives examples from Italian.
Examples such as (1) are mentioned only casually in the literature. However, if the phenomenon is mentioned, the examples always contain modal constructions such as *leider viel zu früh* (1a) or superlatives such as *beste* (1b). In this paper, I focus on this particular tendency to present DP-internal cases in this way. The paper is structured as follows. In section 2, I examine what kind of attributive structures license discourse particles in the DP. In particular, in section 2.1, I investigate the role of noteworthy/expressive content in this context. In section 2.2, I discuss whether the DP-internal occurrence of discourse particles can be characterized analogous to the occurrence of discourse particles in other attributive constructions such as certain types of relative clauses. In section 3, I turn to the issue of what discourse particles reveal about the internal fine-grained structure of DPs and APs, respectively, and about parallels to the functional make-up of CPs. Section 4 summarizes and concludes the paper.

2. DP-internal discourse particles and attributive constructions

When we start to investigate discourse particles inside the DP domain, we first observe that only DPs containing an adjectival modifier license the presence of discourse particles, as demonstrated in (2).

(2) a. *Sie trägt [ihre ja Schuhe].
   she wears her JA shoes
   'She is wearing her shoes.'

   b. Sie trägt [ihre ja umwerfenden Schuhe].
   she wears her JA gorgeous shoes
   'She is wearing her gorgeous shoes.'

We thus see that discourse particles cannot directly modify an NP. Accordingly, claims that relate the phenomenon of DP-internal particles to the issue of whether DPs are phases in the sense of Chomsky (2008) are misguided (cf. Zimmermann 2004 for such a claim). If at all relevant for the issue at hand, one would have to discuss the phasehood of APs.

The second observation is that discourse particles can only occur in DPs where the adjective, according to many approaches (e.g. Kayne 1994: ch. 8), originates in a reduced relative clause which is itself a complement of D° (3). In other words, discourse particles are not licensed in constructions containing non-intersective adjectives ((4); direct modification adjectives according to Cinque 2010, 2014).

(3) a. \[DP \quad \text{ihre} \quad [CP \quad \text{umwerfenden}, \text{C°} \quad \text{IP \quad [DP}}
   [\quad \text{her} \quad \text{gorgeous}
   \quad \text{Schuhe}] \quad \text{... t_i \quad ]]}\]
   shoes
In section 2.2, I will discuss the parallels between DP-intemal discourse particles and their occurrence in relative clauses. But before turning to this issue, we should first focus in more detail on the type of adjectives that are preferably used in attributive configurations containing discourse particles.

2.1 DP-intemal particles and expressive content

When we turn to the connection between the attributive elements and the presence of e.g. *ja in adnominal modification in more detail, we already mentioned in section 1 that DP-intemal discourse particles are always presented in examples containing ‘noteworthy’ content – either expressed by modal elements or by degree expressions such as superlatives. This tendency is also reflected in (5).

(5) a. ??Sie trägt [ihre ja schwarzen Schuhe].
   she wears her JA black shoes
   ‘She is wearing her black shoes.’

b. ??Sie trägt [ihre ja schönen Schuhe]
   she wears her JA pretty shoes
   ‘She is wearing her pretty shoes.’

c. Sie trägt [ihre ja umwerfenden Schuhe].
   she wears her JA gorgeous shoes
   ‘She is wearing her gorgeous shoes.’

This observation is corroborated by diagnostics from adjectival semantics. For instance, certain degree modifiers do only occur with adjectives that can be analyzed as conveying expressive (in the sense of Potts 2007) or ‘extreme’ content. Consider the contrast given in (6).

(6) a. Your shoes are {downright, positively}
   gigantic, gorgeous

b. ??Your shoes are {downright, positively}
   big, pretty
   (Morzycki 2012: 568)

We see that an adjective like *gorgeous is lexically expressive and thus can combine with, e.g., *downright very naturally. Crucially, these adjectives resist an additional modification by *sehr (‘very’), cf. *very gorgeous or, in German, *sehr umwerfend. Often, this class of adjectives is characterized as ‘implicit superlatives’ (Cruse 1986). Given what we discussed above in the context of DP-intemal discourse particles, this characterization dovetails nicely with the observation in the literature (cf. Zimmer-
männ 2004, 2008) that DP-internal discourse particles sound very natural with superlatives (cf. example (1b) above).²

The licensing of DP-internal discourse particles thus corresponds to other cases of expressive constructions conveying the speaker's evaluation of the proposition (surprise, excitement, disapproval, etc.). Crucially, the DP-internal phenomenon displays striking parallels to phenomena that convey a meaning that can be characterized as belonging to the expressive dimension of utterance-level interpretation (for an overview, cf. Trotzke & Turco 2015).

For instance, we observe similar restrictions in topicalization patterns of particles in non-transparent particle-verb constructions. Given certain pragmatic conditions, verb particles can appear in the left periphery of the German clause. Müller (2002) and Zeller (2001) provide several examples, partly based on corpus evidence.

(7) (An der Haltestelle stiegen hübsche Frauen ein.)
at the bus.stop climbed pretty women in.PART
AUS stiegen nur Männer.
out.PART climbed only men
'At the bus stop, pretty women got in. Only men got off.'
(Zeller 2001: 89)

In most cases, topicalization of a particle requires the existence of an alternative that the particle can be contrasted with (in our case: einsteigen 'in-climb'). However, we observe several cases of particle topicalization where a particle cannot be contrasted, such as (8a), backed up by corpus evidence and an acceptability study (Trotzke, Quaglia & Wittenberg in press). In (8), neither raus in rausfliegen (cf. *reinfliegen) nor in rausbringen (cf. *reinbringen) can be contrasted.

(8) a. (Stell Dir vor:) RAUS ist er gestern
('Guess what!') out.PART is he yesterday
gefllogen!
flown
'He got kicked out yesterday.'
b. *(Stell Dir vor:) RAUS hat die Band
('Guess what!') out.PART has the band
ihre Album gebracht!
their album brought
'The band published their new album.'

While rausfliegen entails that someone has been dismissed in a harsh way, rausbringen does not refer to any such intensity scale that could serve as basis for expressing evaluation of the speaker: either the band published or published not. The

² It is well known that the denotation of these adjectives involves a part of a scale (Bierwisch 1989). In this regard, I concur with the approach by Paradis (2001) who argues that such expressive/extreme adjectives operate on scales closed on the upper end. However, this approach is controversial and would thus require more discussion (for another account, cf. Rett 2015).
option of topicalizing the particle in (8a) seems to depend on the lexical aspect of the verb and its aspectual composition with degrees (Caudal & Nicolas 2005).

Coming back to our diagnostics above, we see an analogous pattern when we use a degree modifier such as regelrecht ('downright') in these constructions, cf. Regelrecht raus ist (...) geflogen! ('Downright out.PART is (...) flown') vs. "Regelrecht raus hat (...) gebracht! ('Downright out.PART has (...) brought'). In the context of these cases, we thus note that when a non-contrastable and, therefore, at the level of information structure semantically impoverished element occurs in the left periphery, the expressive interpretation of the utterance rests on a lexical component of the verb that expresses a scale of intensity and, thereby, expressive content.

The examples given in section 1 and our reasoning concerning 'implicit superlatives' above suggest that non-expressive content can also license DP-internal discourse particles as long as additional (modal) elements are added to the structure. In particular, we observe licensing by evaluative adverbs such as leider (cf. (1a) above). Modal licensing as a means to extend the semantics of lexical elements to expressive readings that provide natural contexts for discourse particles is a well-known strategy in other contexts. For instance, Munaro & Obenauer (1999) show distributional restrictions of expletive was ('what') that exemplify a modal licensing of those constructions. In particular, non-argumental was in the left periphery is only possible when elements of a modal type are added (9b-d). Note that warum ('why') is perfectly fine in a context where such an evaluative modality is missing (9a).

(9) a. Warum lacht (d)er?
   why laughs he
b. *Was lacht der?
   what laughs he
c. Was lacht der denn?!
   what laughs he DENN
  ‘Why is he laughing so stupidly?!’
d. Was lacht der so blöd?!
   what laughs he so stupidly

We thus see that semantically impoverished was in the left periphery obligatory results in the expression of “an attitude of the speaker ranging from mild surprise to strong disapproval” (Munaro & Obenauer 1999: 237-238), and that the occurrence of was in the left periphery relies on the presence of evaluative modality.

In addition to licensing strategies involving modal elements, we notice other pragmatic strategies of licensing discourse particles in the DP. Another example of (expressively) undersoring the property denoted by the adjective is adding a focus or grading particle inside the AP. In (10), I introduced the DP-level alternatives [P(shoes) | P ∈ color of shoes] by adding a focus particle inside the AP (10a). We see that in these cases, the presence of ja becomes acceptable even with adjectives that inherently lack the expressive dimension of referring to something remarkable etc.

(10) a. ihre nur SCHWARzen Schuhe
    her only black shoes
As soon as the adjectival attribute is contrasted and thus narrowly focused, the attribute is interpreted restrictively (Fabricius-Hansen 2009). This licensing of discourse particles in atypical contexts by adding focus structure is corroborated by evidence given in Hinterhölzl & Krifka (2013: 11) who show that discourse particles are licensed in central adverbial clauses (here: an event conditional) as soon as a focus particle is added (11b):³

(11) a. ??Wenn ja der Peter kommt, dann wird es langweilig.
    if JA the Peter comes then becomes it boring
    b. Wenn ja nur der Peter kommt, dann wird es langweilig.

In sum, I demonstrated that DP-internal discourse particles preferably show up in attributive constructions that either lexically encode expressive content or are modified by elements that extend the denotation of the whole attribute to expressive readings, thereby displaying pragmatic strategies well-known from the literature on grammatical reflexes of expressive content.

### 2.2 DP-internal particles and restrictiveness

Given our observations in section 2.1, one could argue that structures containing discourse particles at the level of DP should be analyzed analogous to relative clauses at the level of CP. Certain relative clause configurations are characterized in the literature as contributing non-at-issue (here: expressive) meaning components (Potts 2005).

It is generally claimed that discourse particles can occur in certain types of relative clauses (Coniglio 2011; Potts 2005), namely in appositive, i.e. non-restrictive, relative clauses, but not in restrictive ones (cf. Heringa 2012 for an overview of the syntactic representation of appositions in general). To see this, let us look at the following examples.

(12) Eine Kollegin, die (*ja) in Syracuse wohnt, wird kommen.
    a colleague who JA in Syracuse lives will come
    ‘A colleague who lives in Syracuse will come.’  (Kratzer 1999: 5)

(13) *Die Firma sucht einen Angestellten, der ja immer pünktlich ist.
    the company looks for an employee who JA always punctual is
    ‘The company is looking for an employee who is always punctual.’
    (Zimmermann 2004: 32)

³ This is also confirmed by the observation that, in a context where expressive/extreme adjectives are fine, non-extreme adjectives become acceptable when they bear focus, since focus often signals that something is unexpected or noteworthy (cf. Morzycki 2012).
In this respect, discourse particles pattern with discourse- or speaker-oriented adverbs (cf. (14)), suggesting that these elements rely on the same illocutionary independence of appositive relative clauses (cf. Ernst 2009 for an account of adverbial modification at the level of utterance meaning).

(14) a. *The boys [that have frankly lost their case] should give up.
b. The boys, [who have frankly lost their case], should give up.

(Emonds 1979: 239)

We see that, in some cases, the occurrence of discourse particles in relative clauses even forces an appositive interpretation. Compare (15a) to its unambiguous counterpart in (15b):

(15) a. *Autos, die laut sind, sollten mit einer cars which loud are should with a geschlossenen Motorkapsel versehen werden. closed motor.capsule equipped become 'Cars(,) which are loud(,) should be equipped with a closed motor capsule.'

b. Autos, die ja laut sind, sollten [...] 'Cars, which are loud, should [...] ' (= All cars are generally loud.)

However, some qualification is in order. First, although discourse particles may be more frequent in appositive relative clauses, there is evidence suggesting that other factors play a role, such as the semantic content of _ja_, which serves to reactivate common ground information and is therefore inappropriate in its environment in (12). Consider (16), where _wohl_ simply expresses some uncertainty on the part of the speaker:

(16) Eine Kollegin, die wohl in Syracuse wohnt, wird kommen.

Second, and more importantly, even if we want to syntactically account for the observations we saw in section 2.1, we cannot analyze these cases as appositive relative clauses. In contrast to relative clauses, prenominal adjectives in German are not at the edge of the DP, but between D° and N°. Accordingly, their non-restrictiveness cannot be derived by adjoining them to DP (cf. Fabricius-Hansen 2009 for more detailed discussion).

Another objection to analyzing constructions containing DP-intemal particles analogous to appositive relative clauses concerns the feature of restrictiveness itself. Crucially, as implied by the facts in the context of focusing the adjective, the presence of discourse particles clearly improves when the interpretation of the head noun becomes more restrictive (due to the presence of e.g. a focus particle). I therefore fol-

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4 In addition to what follows, I should also point out that there is no real consensus in the syntactic literature concerning valid criteria to distinguish between restrictive and appositive relative clauses (Holler 2013). Likewise, we find diverging approaches for the level of pragmatics. Potts (2005) claims that the contribution of appositive relative clauses can be analyzed as a conventional implicature. Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet (1991) and Holler (2005), by contrast, characterize appositive clauses as background assertions.
low Fabricius-Hansen (2014) and conclude that modification by relative clauses and by attributive adjectives cannot be compared in the context of restrictiveness. The presence of the particle, I want to claim, is rather based on the expression of noteworthy content, which is, typically, not appositive, but restrictive. This is also corroborated by the following fact.

Indefinite DPs, when containing a discourse particle, can only be interpreted as referring to a unique or generic entity. In the following example from Hinterhölzl & Krifka (2013: 9) we see that discourse particles are excluded from the de dicto reading given in (17c).

(17) a. Hans sucht eine wohl erst 30-jährige Frau.
   Speaker asserts [wohl]: There is a 30-year-old woman.
   Hans looks for a only 30-year-old woman.
   Speaker asserts: Hans is looking for this woman.
   Speaker asserts: Hans wants it to be the case that there is a 30-year-old woman.
   Speaker asserts: Hans is looking for this woman.

An indefinite DP like *eine Frau* is not intrinsically unique (Heim 2011). Still, in (17b) Hans is looking for a unique individual (de re reading), whereas in (17c) Hans is looking for any woman that fulfills the criterion to be of a specific age.

In sum, given the syntactic and pragmatic features of constructions containing DP-internal particles, I conclude that we should not analyze these structures analogous to discourse particles occurring in appositive relative clauses. After having demonstrated these differences between the levels of DP and CP, I now turn to aspects that display parallels between the two syntactic domains.

3. DP-internal discourse particles and Force

3.1 Discourse particles and Force

Discourse particles at the level of CP 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/vP position (for a notable exception, cf. Bayer & Trotzke to appear). They make a semantic contribution by co-determining the illocutionary force of an utterance.

\[
(18) \langle \text{ForceP/FinP Force}^0/\text{Fin}^0 [\langle \text{TopP} \rangle \ldots [\text{Prt}^0 [\langle \text{AdvP} \rangle [\text{vP/vP} \ldots]]]]\rangle
\]

Although particles are sensitive to sentence types and utterance contexts, they can appear at an arbitrary distance from Force$^0$. In contrast to approaches assuming LF-movement of the particle (or feature movement), Bayer & Obenauer (2011) demonstrate how discourse particles obtain access to the force system of the clause by virtue of probe-goal agreement. In the recent literature, many approaches assume that the
Force projection hosts at least two kinds of information: (i) the clause type (e.g. declarative vs. interrogative) and (ii) an epistemic reference point (cf. Abraham 2014 for an even more elaborated representation). In the following, I will point out that DP-internal particles must connect to a speaker-related dimension that is independent of the illocutionary force of the clause the DPs occur in. Accordingly, Split-Force approaches could prove useful if one wants to account for the DP-internal cases.

3.2 Discourse particles and DP-internal Force

We observe that DP-internal *ja* can also be used when the DP is part of an interrogative (19a), although it is a well-known observation that *ja*, as a particle scoping over VP/vP, cannot occur in interrogative clauses (19b).

(19) a. Warum trägt sie [DP diese *ja* umwerfenden Schuhe]?
   why wears she this *JA* gorgeous shoes

   "Why is she wearing these gorgeous shoes?"

   b. "Warum trägt sie diese Schuhe *ja* auf der Arbeit?"
   why wears she these shoes *JA* at the work

   "Why is she wearing these shoes at work?"

In (19a), the particle *ja* does not take scope over the VP/vP of the clause. Rather, the particle only scopes over a propositional part expressed within the DP (cf. also Jacobs 1986: 108). 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 the shoes are gorgeous (the propositional content *p* expressed within the DP). Crucially, the speaker does not indicate that he thinks that it is uncontroversial that the referent of *she* is wearing these shoes. Note that the occurrence in DP provides evidence against LF-movement of the particle (cf. section 3.1 above), since the particle takes scope where we see it and, given the Complex NP Constraint, should not be able to move out of the DP constituent anyway.

The fact that the particle scopes over the propositional part expressed within the DP distinguishes these cases from predicative constructions with a truncated functional structure like small clauses.

(20) Hans findet [SC die Schuhe ja nicht schön].
   Hans finds the shoes JA not pretty

   'Hans does not consider the shoes pretty.'

In (20), the particle *ja* does not take scope over a propositional part expressed within the SC. 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 Hans thinks that the shoes are not pretty (the propositional content *p* expressed by the whole CP). Crucially, the speaker does not indicate that he thinks that it is controversial that the shoes are not pretty.

Accordingly, I 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. Pushing the analogy further, I assume that the
particle is invariably stuck in a particle-specific position (cf. section 3.1 above). Notice now that material can intervene between D and Prt, as shown in (21a).

(21) a. ihre in der letzten Saison ja umwerfenden Schuhe
    her in the last season JA gorgeous shoes
b. ihre ja in der letzten Saison umwerfenden Schuhe
    her JA in the last season gorgeous shoes

There is an information-structural difference between (21a) and (21b), cf. their usage in the context given in (22).

(22) Was ist eigentlich mit ihren Schuhen aus der letzten Saison passiert?
    'What happened to her shoes from the last season?'
a. Ihre in der letzten Saison ja umwerfenden Schuhe
    has she unfortunately lost
    shoes hat die leider verloren.
    leider unfortunately lost
b. ??Ihre ja in der letzten Saison umwerfenden Schuhe
    'Unfortunately, she lost her gorgeous shoes from the last season.'

Accordingly, I refer to the intervening landing site as TopP, and I claim that the particle is located within AP between the information-structural layer and TP (TP optionally preceded by DegP and/or NegP). Although TP does not encode Tense in a strict sense, I follow Struckmeier (2010) in postulating a TP-like category at the level of DP. This is motivated by the overt expression of Aspect in participle constructions where present or past participle suffixes fill a T-like head.

Given the above, the derivation of the AP in (22a) runs as follows:

(23) a. [A umwerf]
    => Merge PP
b. [lexical layer in der letzten Saison [A umwerf]]
    => Merge T (overt as participle suffix)
c. [TP [lexical layer in der letzten Saison [A umwerf]] [ -end ]]
    => Merge Prt
d. [PrtP ja ... [TP [lexical layer in der letzten Saison [A umwerf]] [ -end ]]]
    => Merge Top
e. [TopP Top0 [PrtP ja ... [TP [lexical layer in der letzten Saison [A umwerf]] [ -end ]]]]
    => Move PP
f. [TopP in der letzten Saison, [PrtP ja ... [TP [lexical layer ti [A umwerf]] [ -end ]]]]
g. (…)
In addition to the derivation in (23), we observe a positional variation of higher adverbs such as leider ('unfortunately') inside the AP. Given reasonable assumptions, leider should neither be analyzed as some kind of topic nor as a frame setter.

\[(24)\]

\begin{align*}
&\text{a. ihr} & \text{ja} & \text{leider} & \text{gräßlichen} & \text{Schuh} \\
&\text{her} & \text{JA} & \text{unfortunately} & \text{disgusting} & \text{shoes} \\
&\text{b. ihr} & \text{leider} & \text{ja} & \text{gräßlichen} & \text{Schuh} \\
&\text{her} & \text{unfortunately} & \text{JA} & \text{disgusting} & \text{shoes}
\end{align*}

A reasonable approach would be to analyze both ja and leider as belonging to the same category (essentially an evidential-evaluativeP) and thus as being base-generated in both positional variants without changes in information structure. Since DPs (and thus also APs) arguably do not contain a veritable Force head (since they do not express independent speech acts, cf. (19) above), an analysis of DP-internal discourse particles in terms of (adverbial) evaluative elements depending on expressive content inside the AP might be appropriate and could make use of the Split-Force approaches mentioned above.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, I investigated the DP-internal occurrence of discourse particles in German. I demonstrated that attributive configurations containing expressive content or additional discourse modifiers (evaluative adverbs, focus particles) license the presence of discourse particles inside the DP domain (section 2.1). Given this demonstration, I argued against an analysis that equates the occurrence of discourse particles in the DP with appositive relative clauses containing discourse particles (section 2.2). After having sketched the connection to illocutionary force at the level of CP (section 3.1), I demonstrated parallels between the functional make-up of the syntactic representation involving discourse particles at the level of CP and DP.

References


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