

THE SYNTAX OF BORROWED PARTICLES: INSIGHTS FROM (MOSTLY SOUTH AFRICAN) ENGLISH

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1. Background: (borrowed) particles in English

- The starting point: particles?

(1)

	VO	OV
C-TP	✓	✓
TP-C	✗	✓

Distribution of clausal subordinators in VO and OV languages (cf. Dryer 2008)

BUT:

- (2) a. Hongjian xihuan zhe ben shu **ma**? (Mandarin, Li 2006:13)
 Hongjian like this CL book Q
 ‘Does Hongjian like this book?’

- b. You’re coming, **right**?
 b’. *Are you coming, **right**?

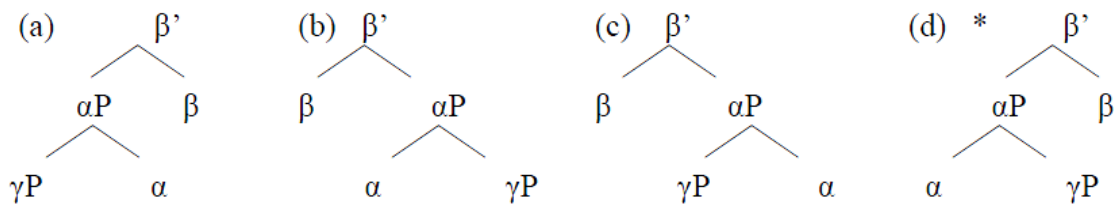
- Crosslinguistically, C-related particles don’t behave in the same way as canonical complementisers (e.g. *that*) → WHY?

- (3) **The Final-over-Final Constraint (FOFC)**; Biberauer, Holmberg & Roberts 2008, *et seq.*)

If α and β are part of the same Extended Projection and α is a head-initial phrase, with β dominating α , then β must be head-initial.

(If α is a head-final phrase, and β is a phrase immediately dominating α , then β can be head-initial or head-final.)

(4) Harmonic and disharmonic combinations



Consistent H-Final Consistent H-initial Inverse FOFC FOFC-violating

→ Why should C-particles so often be superficial FOFC-violators?

- Degrees of structural integration:

- (5) a. **Man**, I’m talking to you!
 b. I’m talking to you, **man**!

c. *Hurry up, mom **man!*** [South African English]

- (c) ≠ a vocative → grammaticalised speaker-oriented particle, expressing (mock) frustration/annoyance

- (6)
- a. *MAN that is/that's weird!*
 - b. *BOY he surprised me!/BOY he did surprise me!*
 - c. *BROTHER I could/*'d do with a beer!*
 - d. *SHIT that would/that'd be cool!*
 - e. *DAMN they are/they're late!*

- (7)
- a. *MAN is that weird!*
 - b. *BOY did he surprise me!*
 - c. *BROTHER could I do with a beer!*
 - d. *??SHIT would that be cool!¹*
 - e. *??DAMN are they late!*

- The particles in (6-7a-c) are also no longer vocatives, and we observe clear differences in relation to how integrated the initial elements are in these structures (cf. McReady 2009², Biberauer 2010)

Differences between (6)- and (7)-type (cf. McReady 2009, Biberauer 2010):

- Phonology:
 - (6)-type features ‘comma intonation’
 - (7)-type is intonationally integrated
- Meaning:
 - (6)-type simply expresses speaker attitude to the proposition denoted by the host sentence (somewhat similar to German modal particles)
 - (7)-type expresses speaker attitude **and** intensifies a gradable predicate within the host sentence
- Syntax:
 - *man* in (6)-type behaves like a peripheral adjunct
 - *man* in (7)-type like a long-distance intensifier (“long-distance *very*” – McCready 2009:674)

Further evidence of the difference between integrated ((6)-) and comma ((7)-) type:
Contexts where comma is fine, but integrated isn't:

(8) *Man (,) this place is cold!*

(9) *Man #(,) the light is on!*

→ integrated intonation requires a gradable predicate ... or one that can be suitably coerced:

(10) *Man we drank wine last night!*

Felicitous: where *drank wine* is taken to mean “drank a lot of wine”

¹ Judgements reflect my (contact-influenced) South African English grammar. Native-speakers of other varieties of English appear to be more accepting of “non-vocative” structures of this type.

² Sentence-final *man*-structures – *That's weird, man!* – are a still further distinct type. McReady's (2009) discussion makes it very clear that initial and final *man* function and integrate with their host sentences very differently, a highly significant point which we leave aside here.

Today's principal empirical focus:

- English's West Germanic relatives have **clause-internal modal particles** (MPs), while Modern English is often said to lack something comparable:

(11) a. Wo hast du *denn* meine Schlüssel hingelegt? [German]
where have you THEN my keys put
'Where did you put my keys? (I'm wondering ...)'
(Bayer & Obenauer 2011:453)

b. Doe dat *dan nu toch maar weer eens even* over nieuw [Dutch]
do that THEN NOW YET BUT AGAIN ONCE JUST again new
'Do that again.' (!)
(van der Wouden 1999:294)

c. Hulle het *mos* baie geld³ [Afrikaans]
he has MOS much money
'He after all (?) has a lot of money'

(12) a. pis is *nu* pe derfschipe of pi dusi onsware [Old English]
this is NOW the strength of thy foolish answer
(*Katherine* 977, cited in van Gelderen 2002:86)

b. Us is *ponne* mycel nedpearft pæt we 3ebu3on to him
us is THEN much need that we obey to him
'We really need to obey him'
(*Hali Meidhad* 6/48-9, cited in van Gelderen 2002:88)

- Van Gelderen's (2002) study: by the Middle English period, clause-internal modal-type particles were very rare indeed, although they were readily available in clause-initial position

(13) a. He is *after all* the leading authority on this topic.
b. *After all* he is the leading authority on this topic.
c. He is the leading authority on this topic, *after all*.
d. He *after all* is the leading authority on this topic.
e. He is the leading authority, *after all*, on this topic.

(14) a. They're *of course* not going to agree.
b. *Of course* they're not going to agree.
c. They're not going to agree, *of course*.
d. They're not, *of course*, going to agree.
e. They *of course* are not going to agree.

(15) a. She's *actually* such a nice person.
b. *Actually* she's such a nice person.
c. She's such a nice person, *actually*.
d. She *actually* is such a nice person.

³ Unless otherwise indicated, Afrikaans examples were constructed by me and verified as correct by four native-speakers from different age groups.

→ Modern English MP-like elements may all occur in clause-initial position, a position systematically **not** available to the “Mittelfeld” MPs illustrated in (11):

- (16) **Mos* het hulle baie geld [Afrikaans]
 MOS have they much money
 ‘He after all (?) has a lot of money’

- Oft-cited notion: the clausal make-up of Modern English is incompatible with “Mittelfeld” MPs
 - Werner Abraham: you need a Mittelfeld to have clause-internal MPs, i.e. (in modern minimalist terms) an appropriately elaborated, information-structurally sensitive vP-domain

- (17) a. ... dat ek die boek *mos* al gelees het [Afrikaans]
 that I the book MOS already read have
 ‘... that I have after all already read the book’
- b. ... dat ek *mos* al boeke gelees het
 that I MOS already books read have
 ‘... that I have after all read books before’
- c. ... dat ek *boeke/BOEKE *mos* al gelees het
 that I books/BOOKS MOS already read have
 ‘... that I have after all read BOOKS before’

(i.e. these particles play a “boundary-marking” role in setting up the so-called *Diesing effects*)

- (18) a. [CP C [TP T [VP scrambling landing site MP EA v [VP OV]]]] WGmc
 b. [CP C [TP T [VP EA v [VP VO]]]] Modern English

- Elly van Gelderen: you need a verb-attracting (i.e. V2) CP to have “real” MPs

THEREFORE: Modern English shouldn’t be able to host West Germanic-type MPs, and these particles shouldn’t be borrowable in varieties that are in contact with West Germanic systems.

[By contrast, since Modern English clearly permits speaker-oriented elements to surface peripherally, we might expect peripheral particles, like the sentence-final particles in (2), to be both borrowable and innovatable. This expectation is borne out:

- (19) a. There’s something here for everyone *lah*. [Singapore English]
 b. Otherwise, how can be considered Singaporean *ah*?
 c. No parking lots here *what*.]

BUT:

- (20) a. She can *mos* call if there is a problem. [South African English/SAE]
 ≈ ‘She can after all call if there is a problem (I don’t think this is a big deal)’
 b. He *sommer* left without apologizing!

- ≈ ‘He just left without apologizing (and I still can’t quite believe it)’
- c. He *sowaar* bought the car his parents told him he couldn’t afford!
≈ ‘He bought the car his parents told him he couldn’t afford, can you believe it?!’ [*sowaar* = literally: ‘so.true’]
- d. He wasn’t invited but he did *darem* bring a present.
≈ ‘He wasn’t invited, but he did at least bring a present.’
- e. They’re *maar* annoying neighbours.
≈ ‘They’re rather annoying neighbours, when it comes down to it’ [*maar* = literally: ‘but’]

AND:

- (21)
- a. **Mos* she can call if there is a problem.
 - b. **Sommer* he left without apologizing!
 - c. *Sowaar* he bought the car his parents told him he couldn’t afford!
 - d. **Darem* he brought a present.
 - e. **Maar* they’re annoying neighbours.

→ with the exception of *sowaar*, these elements also show the characteristic unfrontability of West Germanic MPs

My proposal:

- Evidence from South African English (SAE) suggests that what is required is a suitably activated vP-periphery which interacts with a similarly activated speaker-oriented CP-periphery.
- The Englishes spoken around the world vary as to whether the relevant type of vP-periphery is available: there are non-MP-based structures that independently point to the availability of this type of vP-periphery within a given system (e.g. the availability of speaker-oriented *went and*-structures – Beshears & Biggs 2013).

Structure of the rest of the paper:

- Section 2: the SAE data in a little more detail
- Section 3: sketchy analysis, with suggestive evidence from SAE, Afrikaans and other systems
- [Section 4: summary and outlook]

2. Borrowed Modal Particles in SAE

A. *Sommer*

- Encodes speaker perspective: typically, disapproving and implying that something was done without reason/appropriate consideration
- (22)
- a. He *sommer* left without apologizing! (= (20b))
 - b. They *sommer* don’t care (when they really should).
- It can also be used to mark the speaker’s concept of “least effort”:
- (23)
- a. Let’s *sommer* have a braai! (it’s the least hassle)

- b. We could *sommer* tell them we won't be there (that would solve the problem).
- Distribution:
 - barred clause-initially, as in Afrikaans:
 - (24) a. **Sommer* het hy sonder verskoning geloop
 SOMMER have he without apology walked
 ≠ 'He just left without apology (to my annoyance/surprise)'
 - b. **Sommer* he left without apology.
 [where *sommer* features as part of the set phrase, *sommer like that* = 'just like that', it can surface initially: *Sommer like that*, it was over]
 - barred clause-finally, as in Afrikaans:
 - (25) a. *Hy het sonder verskoning geloop *sommer*.
 b. *He left without apology *sommer*.
 - may co-occur with semantically similar English elements:
 - (26) He *sommer just* left without apology. (added frustration/annoyance)
 - may be used independently as an answer to a question:
 - (27) A: Why did you do that?
 B: *Sommer*.
 ≈ 'Just because'
 - possible in embedded clauses:
 - (28) She had heard that he (had) *sommer* left without apology.

B. *Mos*

- Encodes speaker's assumption that the hearer already knows what is being said:
 - (29) a. That man is *mos* blind.
 b. Moles *mos* can't see much.
- Distribution:
 - barred clause-initially, as in Afrikaans:
 - (30) a. **Mos* is die man blind.
 MOS is the man blind
 ≠ 'The man is blind, as you know'
 - b. **Mos* the man is blind.
 - not barred clause-finally, contra the usual pattern in Afrikaans:

(31) a. ?Ek het jou gesê *mos*!
I have you told *mos*
Should be: Ek het jou *mos* gesê!

b. I told you *mos*.

- may co-occur with semantically similar English elements:

(32) He *mos obviously* can't drive after that accident. (reinforcement)

- can't really be used independently:

(33) A: Why did you do that?

B: *Sommer*.

≈ 'Just because'

- not possible in embedded clauses not introduced by *verba dicendi*:

(34) a. He said he would *mos* do it on time.

b. ??The heard that he would *mos* do it on time.

c. *I hope that he has *mos* done it on time.

C. *Sowaar*

- Encodes speaker perspective: typically, expressing surprise at the fact that something has actually (not) happened, or certainty that something will happen in future.

(35) a. He's *sowaar* going to leave (can you believe it?!)

b. He will *sowaar* forget (just wait!)

c. He *sowaar* doesn't know (I'm really surprised: I thought he knew everything!)

- Distribution:

- Not barred clause-initially, as in Afrikaans:

(36) a. *Sowaar* het dit toe alles uitgewerk!

so.true have it then all out.worked

'Incredibly, it all worked out (I can hardly believe it!)

b. *Sowaar* he passed first time! (see also (21c))

- barred clause-finally, as in Afrikaans:

(37) a. *Dit het toe alles uitgewerk *sowaar*!

b. *He passed first time *sowaar*!

- can't co-occur with semantically similar English elements:

(38) *He *sowaar amazingly/incredibly* passed first time!

- may be used independently as a response to a statement or to query that statement:

- (39) A: He passed first time.
 B: *Sowaar!*
 ≈ ‘You don’t say!’/ ‘Indeed!’
- B’: *Sowaar?*
 ≈ ‘He did?’/‘Really?’

- possible in embedded clauses:

- (40) She had heard that he had *sowaar* passed first time.

D. *Darem*

- Encodes speaker perspective: typically, marking a concession:

- (41) He’s not happy, but he’s *darem* trying to participate. (cf. also (20b))

- Distribution:

- Barred clause-initially, as in Afrikaans:

- (42) a. **Darem* probeer hy deelneem
 DAREM try he part.take
 ≠ ‘He is at least trying to participate’
 b. **Darem* he’s trying to participate.

- Barred clause-finally, as in Afrikaans:

- (43) a. ??Dit het toe alles uitgewerk *darem!*
 b. *It all worked out *darem*

- can co-occur with semantically similar English elements:

- (44) He is *darem at least* making an effort!

- may be used independently as a response to a statement:

- (45) A: He made an effort.
 B: *Darem!*

- possible in embedded clauses:

- (46) She had heard that he had *darem* made an effort.

3. Incorporating West Germanic-style MPs into English

3.1. The SAE vP-periphery

- The grammar of SAE has been influenced by the grammar of Afrikaans in various ways.

- (46) A: How are you today?
B: *No*, I'm fine.
- (47) A: Hoe gaan dit met jou?
how go it with you
'How are you?'
- B: *Nee*, dit gaan goed.
no it go well.
'No, I'm fine.' (in SAE!)
- B': *Ja-nee*, ek kannie kla nie.
yes-no I can.not complain POL
'No, I can't complain' (in SAE!)

- This contact also extends to the vP-periphery: the Afrikaans vP-periphery hosts/generates a range of speaker-oriented material, e.g. (a) the modal particles, (b) a range of light verbs which allow the speaker to convey different speaker perspectives, and (c) predicate-doubling phenomena

Afrikaans "linking" verbs

A. *Loop* ('walk')

(48) Context: We told him not to spend money on an expensive car.

En daar *loop* koop hy (sowaar) 'n Ferrari!
and there walk (NOT) buy he so-true a Ferrari
'And there he goes and buys a Ferrari!'

- NB: walking is quite unlikely to have been involved here; (48) is interpretively identical to:

(49) En daar *gaan* koop hy (sowaar) 'n Ferrari!
and there go buy he so-true a Ferrari
'And there he goes and buys a Ferrari!'

[NB: the *go*-verb involved here is the light motion verb *go*, not the maximally grammaticalised future-form *go*:

(i) Hy *gaan* nog die appels koop
he go still the apples buy
'He will still go and buy the apples'

That the light verb at issue is **not maximally grammaticalised version of GO** is, I would like to suggest, significant here.]

B. *Kom* ('come')

- can also be used in the same speaker-oriented way:

(50) Context: He didn't listen to what I told him; he just went ahead and did what he wanted anyway

En dan kom tjank hy natuurlik by my!
 and then come cry he of-course by me
 ‘And then he comes to cry on my shoulder!’

C. *Staan* (‘stand’)

- In combination with motion-verb *gaan*, *staan* functions in the same way. Unlike the other verbs (*loop*, *kom* and *gaan*), *staan* still requires the pseudo-coordination-marking element *en*:

(51) Hy *gaan staan en vertel* ons allerhande nonsens
 he go stand and tell us all.kinds nonsense
 ‘He goes and tells us all kinds of nonsense’

- Neither motion nor standing is required here!

- SAE is particularly liberal when it comes to the speaker-attitude-encoding *went and* construction (cf. Beshears & Biggs 2013 for general discussion):

(52) a. He *went and* blurted everything out in his sleep.
 b. He *went and* knew the answer.
 c. I was on my way to see him, and there he *goes and* dies.

- Further evidence of Afrikaans’ speaker-oriented vP-periphery: predicate-doubling (Biberauer 2012)

(53) a. ***Sing sal hy sing!***
 sing shall he sing
 ‘Sing, he will jolly well sing! (I won’t give him any alternative)’
 b. ***Trots op haar studente is sy nou eenmaal trots op haar studente!***
 proud of her students is she now one-time proud of her students
 ‘She is SERIOUSLY proud of her students (and there is no getting away from this fact; my perspective on this can’t be questioned!’

- As (53b) shows, Afrikaans permits phrasal doubling. The data suggests that any predicate material in the complement of v can, in principle, be doubled to give a speaker-oriented structure of the kind illustrated in (53).
- The proposal for SAE: it has a strongly contact-influenced vP-periphery, and the highly grammaticalised nature of *went and*-type structures is not the only evidence of this fact: the availability of MPs is another piece of evidence that this is the case.

3.2. Evidence for a speaker-oriented vP-periphery in other systems

- Nupe (Kandybowicz 2013): Speakers can draw on 2 distinct structures to signal their level of commitment to the statements they are making:

(54) a. Musa gí kinkere *ni*:
 Musa eat scorpion NI:

‘(I assure you) Musa DID eat the scorpion’

- b. Musa *gí* kinkere à *ni*:
Musa eat scorpion NEG NI:
‘(I assure you) Musa DID NOT eat the scorpion’
- c. Musa *gí* kinkere *gí*.
Musa eat scorpion eat
‘(Apparently) Musa DID eat the scorpion.’
→ weaker speaker commitment marked via predicate-doubling, which can again be shown to operate at the vP-periphery
→ strong speaker commitment marked via *ni*:, which can be shown to be a CP-peripheral particle

- Mandarin (Tsai 2009): affective constructions featuring *gei* (originally ‘give’):

(55) ta juran *gei* wo he- le san- ping jiu!
he unexpectedly AFF me drink.perf three-bottle wine
‘Unexpectedly, he drank three bottles of wine on me!’

- Korean (Kim 2013): predicate-associated *-ina*, which is located vP-internally, but serves to trigger speaker-oriented expressive (in the sense of Chris Potts) presuppositions:

(56) Lwui- nun khi- ka 190cm-*na* toy- n- ta
Louie-TOP height-NOM 190cm-INA reach-IMPRF-DC
‘Louie is 1 meter 90 tall, which I regard as tall’

3.3. The vP-CP connection

- In phasal terms, we are dealing with phase edges, which have often been suggested to have special interpretive properties, including “anchoring” ones.
- Proposal: speaker-oriented features can be encoded at both the CP- and the vP-periphery
- Thinking in the terms of Roberts & Roussou (2003), in terms of which grammaticalisation involves **upward reanalysis**:
 - *went and*-type structures can be understood as involving a light verb located in the vP-domain, and not the VP-domain
 - relevant formal features of *went and*-type elements Agree with probing features on C, formally marking the speaker connection in LF terms.
 - Movement to the CP-domain isn’t required.
 - Grammaticalisation can stop before it reaches the “dedicated domain” associated with a particular interpretation (arguably, expected under an Agree-based approach).
 - For elements that don’t originate low in a structure (e.g. particles), we might postulate Tom Roeper-style feature-free Pair Merge giving way to Set Merge. As there are initially no features involved, merger must be to a phase-peripheral position (formal feature-less elements can be c-selected; hence must be “last out” of their Lexical Array)

- A key point requiring further thought: the role of DEGREE-features in all of this.

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