

11. Presentational particles

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I. The form-meaning mismatch

M. Greek $\nu\alpha$ (na)	Latin <i>ecce</i>
Arabic $هَآ$ (<i>hā</i>)	Italian <i>ecco</i>
Spanish <i>hé</i>	Hebrew $הֵן$ (<i>hēn</i>) / $הִנֵּה$ (<i>hinnēh</i>)
Portuguese <i>eis</i>	French <i>voilà/voici</i>

Figure 1. Presentational particles in some languages

- Presentational particles constitute a 1:many form-meaning mismatch.
- Basic meaning 'here/there is/are', enriched by pragmatic meaning components such as
 - invitation to the hearer to take note of a sudden occurrence (commissive speech act)
 - highlighting of an object
 - mirativity

II. Motivation

- Presentational particles: a challenge for a compositional linguistic analysis.
- Varying degrees of transparency: the apparent 1:many form-meaning mismatch is not always complete. Some of the pragmatic meaning components can often still be seen
 - in concrete (fossilized) morphemes
 - in the syntactic properties of the particle (see Fig. 2)

LOCATIVE	COMMISSIVE SPEECH-ACT
MORPHOLOGICALLY EXPRESSED	
French <i>voilà / voici</i> (1) * <i>Voici ici un livre.</i> PRESV here a book	French <i>voilà / voici</i> (/voal/, homophonous with the imp. of the verb meaning 'to see / to watch')
SUBCATEGORIZED	
OBLIGATORY: Spanish <i>he</i> OPTIONAL: Ital. <i>ecco</i>	RECOGNIZABLE BY CLITIC POSITION Spanish <i>he</i> / Ital. <i>ecco</i>
(2) a. <i>He *(aqui) un libro</i> b. <i>Ecco (qui) un libro.</i> PRESV here a book	(3) a. <i>He lo aquí.</i> / a.' * <i>Lo hé aquí.</i> b. <i>Ecco lo</i> / b.' * <i>Lo ecco</i> PRESV=CL (here) CL=PRESV (here) (Enclitic as with imperatives)

Figure 2. Partial transparency

- Such particles – independently of their source category – end up having some verb-like properties. This suggests

III. Research questions

Leading question → How do presentational particles develop over time in different languages?

- When and in which order do the different components that make up a presentational particle appear?
- Does a particular pragmatic function appear together with certain elements or structures?
- In language contact, do languages adopt such particles together with the structure of the source language?
- Which framework of analysis is the most appropriate one to model the detected changes?

IV. Hypotheses and method

- Main objectives:
 - to follow the diachronic paths of presentational particles in at least two Romance languages
 - to find out how the complex meaning, the syntactic structures, and the pragmatic functions of these items arose and developed
- Method: analyses of historical corpora
- The Romance languages are an ideal field of study for this research because of the varying origins of presentational particles.

Italian <i>ecco</i>	< Lat. <i>ecce</i> + (probably= Lat. <i>eum</i> 'he'
French <i>voici/voilà</i>	< imp. of <i>voir</i> 'so see' + locative adverbs
Spanish <i>he</i>	taken from Arabic <i>hā</i>
Portuguese <i>eis</i>	of uncertain origin

Figure 3. Origin of some Romance presentational particles

Hypotheses → (1) The history of presentational particles is an interplay between semantic bleaching and a tendency to reconstitute the parts that are not interpretable anymore. (2) A mere description of such items as defective verbs (see Bouchard 1988, among others) does not suffice, given the numerous other properties of those particles, many of which lie outside the verbal domain.

- Illustration for Hypothesis 1: The locative deixis seems to have been implicitly present in the Spanish particle *he* (corresponding to the Arabic source item), but started to become obligatorily accompanied by locative adverbs in the 15th century (Corominas & Pascual 1989: 334–335) – we expect that this was preceded by a period in which the adverb was optional.
- Frameworks: Minimalist, cartographic or HPSG analysis (building on Sign-Based Construction Grammar).

V. Connections to other research projects

- Type of form-meaning mismatch: 10,12 (1:many form-meaning mismatch)
- Empirical domain: 2,5,8 (language change)
- Content: 7 (directive speech acts/imperative sentence mood), 10 (particles)
- Methods: most projects (corpus study), in part. 8

VI. Possible follow-up studies

- Presentational particles in Arabic dialects
- Presentational relative clauses
- Diachronic sources of presentational particles from a typological perspective