

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

#### 5.1 Analysis

Concluding the discussion of the syntactic behavior and distribution of VG *dn*, the core analysis that has been proposed can be summed up as follows: VG *dn* can be analyzed to be a clitic version of SG and VG *denn*. As such it can be assumed to be base-generated in a SpecFP position at the upper end of Cinque's Hierarchy. Being a clitic element, VG *dn* has to move up to the canonical clitic position of German and Bavarian, namely the C<sup>0</sup> or Fin<sup>0</sup> head, to which it is adjoined in order to compensate for its lack of prosodic features. To allow for semantic interpretability, it can furthermore be assumed that VG *dn* and SG (and VG) *denn* covertly rise into the CP layer at LF to gain scope over the sentence type indicator and the speech act operator.

##### 5.1.1 The base position of VG *dn*

It has been shown that Cinque's (1999) framework is more appropriate to explain the syntactic behavior of German discourse particles than the traditional adjunction analysis. These particles are subject to strict linearization rules which cannot be accounted for in a traditional analysis and Cinque's hypothesis furthermore allows for a more restrictive analysis in that it attributes one fixed position to each functional element, while an adjunction approach allows discourse particles to be arbitrarily adjoined to a number of different maximal projections. It follows directly from these considerations that *dn* has to be base-generated in a SpecFP position and is moved to its clitic position later in the derivation, as elements of this

category (i.e. *sentence adverbs* in a broad sense) have to license the corresponding functional head by merging in its specifier (cf. Poletto and Zanuttini 2003). As VG *dn* could be shown not to essentially differ from SG *denn* in its semantic contribution, it can be assumed to be base-generated within the same SpecFP position as *denn* at the high end of Cinque's Hierarchy.

### 5.1.2 The surface position of VG *dn*

It has been shown that VG *dn* can be analyzed as a *syntactic clitic*, i.e. as an element which is prosodically deficient and obligatorily moves to a specific clitic position. It could be shown to follow clitic pronouns (which are assumed to be head-adjoined to C<sup>0</sup> or Fin<sup>0</sup> in varieties of German and Bavarian) and to precede all non-clitic elements, except for stressed pronouns; for this exceptional case a different analysis has been proposed. To account for the clitic status of *dn*, Cardinaletti and Starke's (1999) approach has been adopted which proposes that clitic elements lack one functional layer of weak elements (i.e. two functional layers of strong elements). Accordingly, clitic elements need to be in a local relation to a position where they have the lacking features of their highest layer replaced (the appropriate surface position for *weak* elements) and to attach to a position where they have their lack of prosodic features compensated for (their *clitic* position – presumptively the C<sup>0</sup> or Fin<sup>0</sup> position in varieties of German). It has been shown that there are empiric and conceptual reasons to treat discourse particles as deficient, *weak (sentence) adverbials* in Cardinaletti and Starke's terminology, and to treat *dn* as a *clitic discourse particles* (i.e. as a *clitic (sentence) adverbial*). Consider the following typology of adverbials in varieties of German and Bavarian which is proposed in this thesis:

- (1) *strong adverbials*:
- a. SG (ganz) offensichtlich  
(all) obviously
  - b. SG (sehr) WOHL  
(very) well
- (2) *weak adverbials* (i.e. *discourse particles*):
- a. SG (\*sehr) wohl  
(\*very) wohl<sub>D.PRT.</sub>
  - b. SG (\*ganz / \*sehr / \*ziemlich) ja  
(\*all / \*very / \*quite) ja<sub>D.PRT.</sub>
  - c. SG (\*ganz / \*sehr / \*ziemlich) denn  
(\*all / \*very / \*quite) denn<sub>D.PRT.</sub>
- (3) *clitic adverbials* (i.e. *clitic discourse particles*):
- a. Bav. -o  
-o<sub>D.PRT.</sub> (< /ja/)
  - b. Bav. -(a)n/-(e)n  
(a)n/(e)n<sub>D.PRT.</sub> (< /denn/)
  - c. VG -dn  
dn<sub>D.PRT.</sub> (< /denn/)

For the apparent counter-example of contrastively stressed full pronouns which may precede VG *dn*, the following has been proposed: As only pronouns which are directly linked to a reference in the utterance context license *dn* to follow them, it can be assumed that *dn* is base-generated within their extended projection, cliticizing to their  $\Sigma_N^0$  head which contains the relevant prosodic features that *dn* needs to be associated with. This account is supported by the fact that the semantic contribution of *dn* consists of contextualizing the expression which it modifies and is therefore fully compatible with the semantics of such stressed pronouns.

In conclusion, the following two structures can be proposed, (4) being the "default" case in which *dn* is base-generated within a clausal functional

projection, taking scope over the whole utterance and head-adjoining to the canonical clitic position  $C^0$  or  $Fin^0$ , (5) being the "exceptional" case in which *dn* is base-generated within an extended pronominal projection, taking narrow scope over the pronoun and head-adjoining to its  $\Sigma_N^0$  head, containing the relevant prosodic features:

- (4) a. Was macht-*n*<sub>i</sub> ER [<sub>FP1</sub> *t*<sub>i</sub> am Wochenende?  
 what makes-*dn* he on.the week.end  
 'What is he doing on the weekend?'
- b. [<sub>CP</sub> Was [<sub>C</sub> macht-*n*<sub>i</sub>] [<sub>IP-Space</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> ER] [<sub>FP1</sub> [<sub>SpecFP1</sub> *t*<sub>i</sub>] [<sub>FP1'</sub> F<sub>1</sub> [am  
 Wochenende [<sub>VP</sub> ...]]]]]]]?
- (5) a. Was macht [ <sub>$\Sigma$ NP</sub> ER-*dn*] am Wochenende?  
 what makes he-*dn* on.the week.end  
 'What is he doing on the weekend?'
- b. [<sub>CP</sub> Was [<sub>C</sub> macht] [<sub>IP-Space</sub> [ <sub>$\Sigma$ NP</sub> [ <sub>$\Sigma$ N</sub> ER [ <sub>$\Sigma$ N</sub> -*dn*  $\Sigma_N^0$ ]]]] [<sub>am  
 Wochenende [<sub>VP</sub> ...]]]]]?</sub>

### 5.1.3 The LF position of VG *dn*

Following Zimmermann (2004a), it has been claimed that all discourse particles covertly move into the CP layer at LF to allow for interpretability as they have to take scope over specific positions within the CP space associated with sentence typing and speech act marking. Further empirical evidence for this analysis can be gained from the observation that all discourse particles are sentence type or speech act specific and therefore have to be in a local relation with the syntactic positions which are responsible for determining these factors and which are commonly assumed to be located within the CP-space (cf. Rizzi 1997 and subsequent work).

The issue that *dn* behaves differently with respect to its sentence type specificity than *denn* might be answered in three ways. First, it might

be proposed that the CP-internal LF-position of *dn* is different from that of *denn*, such that *dn* cannot be licensed in yes/no-questions anymore while *denn* still can. Second, it might be assumed that the lack of a specific semantic feature which is relevant for being licensed in yes/no-questions is entailed by the structural deficiency of the clitic VG *dn*, but not in the case of Bav. *(a)n/(e)n*. Third, it might be assumed that it is the proper semantics of VG *dn* which lacks certain properties of SG (and VG) *denn* which are necessary for its occurrence in yes/no-questions. At this point, it is not possible to decide for one of these three hypotheses.

#### 5.1.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, for clauses containing VG *dn* with sentential scope the relevant part of the syntactic derivation can be sketched as follows.

(6) *Base-generation of dn within the SpecFP<sub>1</sub> position*

[CP-space ... [FinP ... [Fin V<sub>fin</sub>] [IP-space ... [FP1 [SpecFP1 *dn*] [FP1' F<sub>1</sub> [...

(7) *Clitic movement of dn to the C<sup>0</sup> or Fin<sup>0</sup> position*

[CP-space ... [FinP ... [Fin V<sub>fin</sub>(-...)-*dn*<sub>i</sub>] [IP-space ... [FP1 [SpecFP1 t<sub>i</sub>] [FP1' F<sub>1</sub> [...

(8) *LF-Movement of dn into the CP-layer<sup>37</sup>*

[CP-space [*dn*<sub>i</sub> [ ? [ForceP Force<sup>0</sup><sub>[int]</sub> [FinP ... [Fin V<sub>fin</sub>] [IP-space ... [FP1 [SpecFP1 t<sub>i</sub>] [FP1' F<sub>1</sub> [...

Comparing the behavior of VG *dn*, SG *denn* and Bav. *(a)n/(e)n*, it is obvious that they can be treated on a par. As they share their core semantic content, all three can be assumed to be base-generated in the same position, SpecFP<sub>1</sub> (cf. (6)). As SG *denn* is a weak, but not a clitic element, it remains in this position, while VG *dn* and Bav. *(a)n/(e)n* have to

---

<sup>37</sup> '?' denotes the question speech act operator (cf. Zimmermann 2004a).

undergo clitic movement and head adjoin to the  $C^0$  or  $Fin^0$  head (cf. (7)). It can furthermore be assumed that all three varieties of *denn* covertly rise to the CP space at LF to take scope over the question speech act operator (cf. (8)).

## 5.2 Open questions

This thesis is conceived as a tentative, first approach at an explanation of the complex syntactic behavior of the discourse particle *denn* in Standard German and its counterpart *dn* in Colloquial Non-Standard Viennese German within the generative framework. At this point it is clear that more questions have been raised than answered and much is left open for further research on the topic. Some core issues which are left open in the proposed analysis are specified below.

Is it conceptually favorable to extend Cinque's Hierarchy to account for such a large number of additional functional projections? What might be the basic functional contribution of these respective functional projections? Is there further conceptual support for treating discourse particles as weak adverbials within Cardinaletti and Starke's analysis? Is it possible to state more precisely what the properties of stressed pronouns are that are essential for licensing VG *dn* to be base-generated within their extended projection? Are there further empirical or theoretical reasons to assume covert LF-movement of discourse particles to the CP-layer? What is the reason for VG *dn* being unable to occur in yes/no-questions? How can the sentence type and speech act specificity of discourse particles be implemented in a syntactic analysis within the generative framework? How many different sub-classes must be assumed for the descriptive *function class* of discourse particles? Is it appropriate to subsume German discourse particles under one overall label at all? How can the insights from this analysis be carried over to other Germanic languages whose lexicon also contains discourse particles of the German type? And finally, what is the exact nature of the factors that may cause variability in

grammaticality judgments as was observed and discussed for the case of VG *dn*. These and many other issues remain unresolved and open for further research, as they exceed the scope of this thesis.