

Introduction

This thesis proposes an analysis of the syntactic behavior of the reduced discourse particle *dn* in *Colloquial Non-Standard Viennese German* (Ger. *Wiener gehobene Umgangssprache*, henceforth abbreviated as *VG*). This is a syntactic element whose primary purpose is to *contextualize*, expressing the speaker's assumption that the propositional frame of a *wh*-question is available to the hearer from the context (cf. chapter 4). The framework is generative, syntactic analyses are based on the *Principles and Parameters Theory* of syntax. The main objective is to determine where *VG dn* is inserted into the structure during the syntactic derivation, where it is spelled out to the *Phonetic Form (PF)* interface, and how it is interpreted at the *Logical Form (LF)* interface. In order to determine the syntactic behavior of *dn*, I will compare its surface behavior to that of its non-reduced counterpart *denn*. Furthermore, it will be discussed how *dn* interacts with co-occurring discourse particles, adverbials, nouns, pronouns and other elements in the clause.

The discourse particle *VG dn* functionally corresponds to Standard German (henceforth *SG*) *denn* and Bavarian (henceforth *Bav.*) *(a)n/(e)n*. While *SG* has a full form of *denn* and Bavarian has the clitic forms, *VG* will be shown to have both a full discourse particle *VG denn* and its clitic counterpart *VG dn*. While their core semantic and pragmatic function can be shown to be equal, they differ not only in their syntactic behavior (*dn* behaving as a syntactic clitic), but also in their licensing conditions. *VG denn* behaves on a par with *SG denn* in that it is licensed in all kinds of interrogatives. In contrast, *VG dn* can exclusively occur in *wh*-questions (and is never licensed in *yes/no*-questions). Furthermore, *dn* can only marginally be embedded – again in contrast to *denn*. In this thesis, the respective behavior of *VG dn* is compared to that of *SG* (and *VG*) *denn* and possible reasons for the differences are discussed.

In Chapter 1 I provide a general presentation of the phenomenon of German discourse particles. This is followed by an overview on descriptive

attempts to define and classify them (1.1). This introduction is followed by a presentation of my own collected data on the syntactic behavior of VG *dn*, which especially focuses on the overt syntactic behavior of *dn* with respect to the sentential arguments and on its selectional restrictions with respect to sentence types (1.2 and 1.3).

Chapter 2 provides an overview on the general syntactic behavior of discourse particles, based on the descriptive literature (2.1). Then, the theoretical framework is presented in chapter 2.2 and the two main possibilities for analyzing discourse particles within the Generative Framework will be discussed. In chapter 2.3 I demonstrate the possible analysis that they adjoin to functional projections of the IP or VP space. In chapter 2.4 I discuss the alternative analysis that they are generated in the specifier positions of functional projections, as assumed for adverbs by Cinque (1999, 2004). It is shown, how both approaches can be adapted to account for the behavior of discourse particles; the respective advantages and disadvantages are discussed. Finally it is shown Cinque's framework is more appropriate to deal with the phenomenon of German discourse particles.

In chapter 3 (3.1) the phenomena of neutral sentential stress and information structure (i.e. topic-focus and theme-rheme organization) of German clauses is discussed, conveying their interaction with the behavior of VG *dn*. Analyses of the different semantic and syntactic types of DPs are presented to determine their behavior with respect to these discourse particles (3.2). In the third part of chapter 3 (3.3), a short overview on the question of the diachronic sources of *dn*, *denn* and other discourse particles is presented. Finally, an analysis of the overt syntactic behavior of VG *dn* is sketched in which it is analyzed as a syntactic clitic which leaves its base SpecFP position to head adjoin to the canonical clitic position (C^0 or Fin^0) in order to have its lack of prosodic features compensated (3.4). The apparent counter-argument that *dn* is able to follow certain types of contrastively stressed pronouns is explained by proposing that *dn* in these cases does not take scope over the whole

clause, but takes narrow scope over the respective pronoun and is accordingly base-generated within its extended projection (3.2.1, 3.4)

In chapter 4 a semantic analysis of VG *dn* and SG (and VG) *denn* is proposed, based on Kratzer's (1999) and Zimmermann's (2004a, 2004b) approaches to the meaning of discourse particles (in chapter 4.2 and 4.3, respectively) and on traditional observations in the descriptive literature (chapter 4.1). It is argued that discourse particles are modifiers of illocutionary operators and sentence type indicators. Thus, they have to undergo covert quantifier raising at LF to take scope over the respective operators within the CP space.