Interaction between modal particles and the illocutionary force: a syntactic approach

Modal particles, illocutionary force, syntax, interpretation, Basque

Introduction In the literature of modal particles illocutionary force has been claimed to be central in order to legitimize their use, since their function involves the modification of the sentence type (Zimmermann 2004; 2011; Bayer & Obenauer 2011; Struckmeier 2014; cf. Repp 2013). Two analyses to account for how particles located in the TP domain reach the ForceP have been mainly put forth in the Germanic linguistics, which are the best examined languages by far: a) those who as Bayer & Obenauer (2011) claim that the $Force^0$ searches for the [uForce] feature contained by $Part^0$ and, by agreeing with it, the contribution of particles shapes the semantics of $Force^0$; and b) those who as Zimmermann (2004; 2011) propose that particles raise to ForceP in LF. I adopt a more syntactic account for this matter, following Bayer and Obenauer (2011), but based on the data offered by Basque modal particles (which, unlike German ones, are undoubtedly syntactic heads located in the TP domain) avoiding the idea that $Force^0$ always looks for particles under its c-command and explaining also the case of those particles which, contrary to the standard belief, can also occur in embedded contexts lacking illocutionary force.

Data Basque language conveys evidentiality (*bide*, *ei* and *omen*), epistemicity (*ahal* and *ote*) and marks polarity questions (*al*) by using modal particles. Traditionally (Euskaltzaindia 1987; de Rijk 2008), they have been claimed to occupy the same position in the TP domain (Albizu 1991; Elordieta 1997; Elordieta 2001; Haddican 2008; Arregi & Nevins 2012) since they all are in complementary distribution and share the same syntactic pattern, i.e. they always precede the finite verb and behave as clitics attached to it. In addition to this, modal particles are claimed to occur only in contexts containing illocutionary force (Coniglio 2007; cf. Tan & Mursell 2018); however, Basque *ahal*, *ei*, *omen* and *ote* do not share this property since they can occur in those contetxs discussed to lack illocutionary force such as restricted relative clauses or noun complement clauses:

(1) Egia   entzun ote   duen   beldurrak kezkatzen nau.
    truth.ABS   listen   PART AUX.C fear.ERG   worry.IPFV AUX
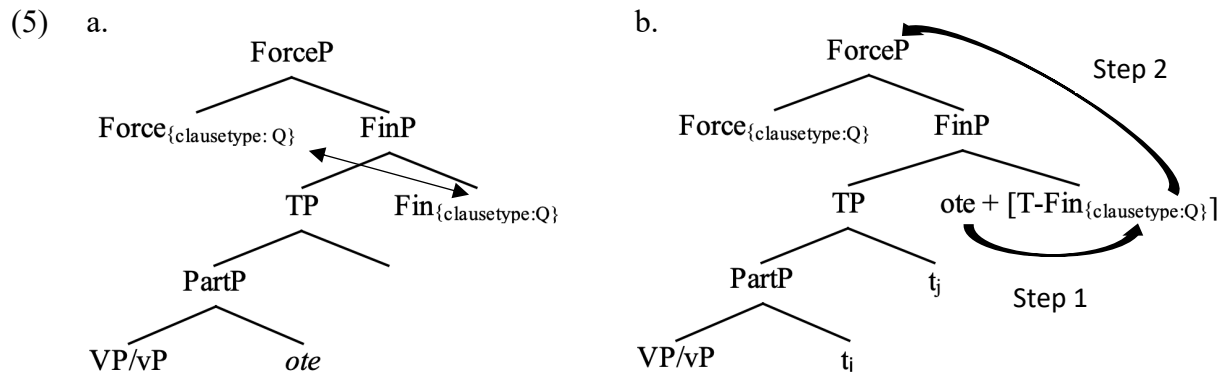   'The fear that s/he might have heard the truth worries me.'

On the contrary, the particle *al* is restricted to those with illocutionary force:

(2) Etorri al   den   galdezka ari   da.
    come   PART AUX.C asking   PROG AUX
    'S/he's asking whether s/he came.'

(3) Etorriko (*al) den   galdera   ez   zaio batere gustatu.
    come.FUT PART AUX.C question.ABS not AUX at.all   like
    'S/he didn't like at all the question whether s/he may come here.'

Regarding their interpretation, two groups can be distinguished: *ahal*, *ei*, *omen* and *ote* conveying evidentiality, commitment and probability and *al* usually described to convey no interpretation and functioning closer to performativity. These groups match the distinction previously presented regarding the requirement of the illocutionary force. Additionally, this has an impact in the interpretation of those particles. If we consider *ote* for illustration purposes, this particle displays a 'I wonder' effect in contexts containing illocutionary force (ex. 4), however, it can only convey the speaker's probability towards the proposition in contexts lacking illocutionary force (ex. 1) (cf. the behaviour of *wohl* in similar contexts (Coniglio 2007)):

(4) Egia   entzun ote du?
     truth.ABS listen P   AUX
     'Did s/he know the truth? (I'm wondering)'

<u>Proposal</u> Based on their separate distribution in embedded contexts and interpretation, I put forth the following analysis: a) the Force-Fin phrases are realised separately (Rizzi 1997) but the [clausetype] feature in $Force^0$ agrees with the one in Fin^0 considering that complementizers occur in Fin^0 (Ortiz de Urbina 1999); b) the modal particle raises to Fin^0 where the finite verb is formed and merges with it creating a morphonological word (Arregi & Nevins 2012); c) the particle modifies the modality of the finite verb (step1); and d) the illocutionary force is modified through the agreement between $Force^0$ and Fin^0 (step2) (cf. Bhadra 2017). Let us illustrate this:

(5) a.

         ForceP
        /   \
  $Force_{\{clausetype:\ Q\}}$ FinP
                    /   \
                  TP $Fin_{\{clausetype:Q\}}$
                 / \
              PartP
             /   \
          VP/vP   *ote*

     b.

         ForceP   Step 2
        /   \
  $Force_{\{clausetype:Q\}}$ FinP
                    /   \
                  TP   ote + [T-$Fin_{\{clausetype:Q\}}$]
                 / \ t_j
              PartP   Step 1
             /   \
          VP/vP t_i

This is the derivation of sentences as (ex. 2 or 4) where the particle affects the illocutionary force. Nevertheless, particles as *ote* can also occur in contexts lacking the illocutionary force as (ex. 1). In such cases I propose that the clause lacks the ForceP (Cuba 2017; Elordieta & Haddican 2018) and the particle only modifies the modality of the finite verb; the fact that there is no ForceP explains why evidential-epistemic particles can appear in such contexts but performative particles cannot, since the latter could not interact with the sentence type operator. Also, this accounts for the different interpretations: *ote* in (1) can only convey its epistemic interpretation since it cannot associate with the interrogative operator in $Force^0$ and turn a *bona fide* question into a conjectural one, unlike *ote* in (4) (Littell, Matthewson & Peterson 2010; Eckardt & Beltrama 2018).

<u>Main contributions</u> The analysis presented here improves Bayer and Obenauer's (2011) because a) it avoids the search for $Part^0$ of $Force^0$ (considering that particles seldom occur and, hence, its constant search would not be justified); b) it accounts for the interaction between particle and illocutionary force without covert movements; c) it explains why some particles appear only in clauses containing ForceP and other ones do not need to; finally d) it provides an explanation for the both interpretations expressed by *ote*.

<u>Main references</u> Arregi, K. & A. Nevins. 2012. *Morphotactics: Basque auxiliaries and the structure of spellout.* Dordrecht/ New York: Springer Science & Business Media. **Bayer, J. & H-G. Obenauer. 2011.** Discourse Particles, Clause Structure, and Question Types. *Linguistic Review* 28(4). 449–491. **Coniglio, M. 2007.** German modal particles in the IP-domain. *Rivista di Grammatica Generativa* 32. 3–37. **Elordieta, A. & B. Haddican. 2018.** Truncation feeds intervention. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 36(2). 403–443. **de Rijk, R. 2008.** *Standard Basque: A progressive grammar.* Cambridge: MIT Press. **Zimmermann, M. 2011.** Discourse particles. In C. Maienborn, K. von Heusinger & P. Portner (arg.). *Semantics: An international handbook of natural language meaning*, 2011-2038. Berlin/ Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.