

Discourse markers at the interface between syntax and prosody: The case of *guarda te* in regional Italian of Veneto.

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In this paper, we deal with the verb-based discourse marker *guarda te*, formed by the combination of the 2nd-person singular imperative of the verb ‘look’ and the accusative 2nd-person singular pronoun ‘you’, in regional Italian of Veneto (North-east Italy, Padua-Este area). By analyzing its interpretive, syntactic and prosodic properties, we argue in favor of the representation of discourse-related items in a dedicated domain in the left periphery of the clause (Rizzi 1997, Speas & Tenny 2003, Hill 2007, Haegeman & Hill 2013, Munaro & Poletto 2009, Coniglio & Zegrean 2012 a.o.), where functional projections encode not only syntactic and interpretative features, but also prosodic ones.

General properties. *Guarda te* can have either (i) a mirative interpretation, selecting only exclamatives or other type of sentences expressing a sense of surprise (see (1)); or (ii) an evidential reading, expressing an obvious confirmation with authority and sense of superiority, as in (2).

- 1) a. **Guarda te** (che) è andato al ristorante senza dircelo! *Surprise*
‘*Guarda te* (that) he’s gone to the restaurant without saying a word!’
b. ***Guarda te** è andato al ristorante. *Non surprise*
‘*Guarda te* he’s gone to the restaurant.’
- 2) *Context:* The weather is horrible, the sky is black and all the weather forecasts for today are very bad.
A: Che dici, dovrei prendere l’ombrello?
‘What do you think, should I bring the umbrella?’
B: **Guarda te** (*che) mi pare evidente.
‘*Guarda te*, that’s obvious.’

Syntactically, both mirative and evidential *guarda te* occupy only sentence initial positions (3), cannot be embedded (4), and can appear in isolation (5).

- 3) a. *Non vedi **guarda te** come piove?
‘Don’t you see *guarda te* how much it rains?’
b. *Non vedi come piove **guarda te**?
‘Don’t you see how much it rains *guarda te*?’
- 4) *Lui sapeva *che* **guarda te** bisognava prendere l’ombrello.
‘He knew *that* *guarda te* it was necessary to bring the umbrella.’
- 5) A: Devo portare l’ombrello?
‘Should I bring the umbrella?’
B: (Eh) **Guarda te**. (=That’s obvious)

What is *guarda te*? We show that (i) *guarda te* is distinct from *guarda* ‘look’, analyzed by Cardinaletti (2015). *Guarda* has a very different interpretation: its main function is attracting attention (6a). Morphologically, *guarda* not only occurs in the 2nd-person singular, but can also be in the 2nd-person plural *guardate* and in the polite form *guardi*. Syntactically, *guarda* can appear in sentence initial, internal, and final position (6b).

- 6) a. *Guarda* (*te) che se non la smetti ti picchio
‘*Look* that if you don’t stop it I beat you.’
b. Io non so più cosa dirti *guarda* (*te).
‘I don’t know what to tell you any more *look*’.

(ii) *Guarda te* is not a real verb: for instance, it does not allow clitics **guardalo/ci te*. It is not a head either. In fact, *guarda te* is not completely grammaticalized: in appropriate contexts it can be substituted by *guarda tu/ tu guarda* (*tu* is the 2nd-person singular pronoun in the Nominative). Furthermore, it can be modified, although only by *un po* ‘a bit’. It is notable that in this case, and only in this case, the 2nd-person plural form is allowed (*guardate un po* ‘voi’).
(iii) On the basis of Cardinaletti’s (cit.) analysis of *guarda*, we argue that *guarda te* is a weak

adverb. Similarly to sentential adverbs, *guarda te* is in the left periphery and has a specific meaning and prosody. However, it cannot be analyzed as a real adverb since (a) the mirative *guarda te* cannot be substituted by a corresponding adverb like *sorprendentemente* ‘surprisingly’, (b) it cannot be focalized, and (c) its lexical meaning of *looking* is bleached. We propose that *guarda te*, being a weak adverb, is a XP that occupies a specifier position of either a mirative or evidential functional projection (*à la* Cinque 1999) in the left periphery of the sentence, in a speech-act domain that encodes the relation between context, speaker’s/hearer’s attitude and selected clause (Speas & Tenny 2003, Hill 2007 & *sub.*, Haegeman 2014 a.o.). To further support our proposal, we also show that *guarda te* can co-occur with other verb-based discourse markers with different functions and that their relative order is restricted in a way that corresponds to Cinque’s (1999) hierarchy for adverbs: *Evaluative (mirative) > Evidential > Epistemic > Obligation*.

The tight link between prosody and meaning. The two *guarda te* (mirative and evidential) have two different prosodic properties: (i) The prosodic contour of the mirative *guarda te* is rising, while that one of the evaluative *guarda te* is falling; (ii) the mirative *guarda te* can be followed by a complementizer *che* ‘that’, but if *che* is absent *guarda te* must be followed by a pause. Differently, the evidential *guarda te* cannot be followed by the complementizer *che* and it is always followed by a pause (cf. (1) with (2)). These observations show that the interpretive properties of *guarda te* are strongly tied to their prosodic contour, which, together with the context of use, is fundamental to distinguish the mirative from the evidential reading. On the basis of these observations, we propose that a single level of syntactic representation encodes both semantic and prosodic properties, in the spirit of the cartographic approach (Rizzi 1997, Cinque 1999, Giorgi 2014). but also inspired by the work of Frascarelli (2012), Frascarelli & Jiménez-Fernández (2016) and Wiltschko (2014). Accordingly, I argue that the functional projections occupied by discourse markers such as *guarda te* are the specifiers of a non lexical head H that mediates between syntax and prosody (in spirit of Giorgi cit., who proposed the head K for the analysis of parentheticals). The head H is the syntactic realization of the pause between *guarda te* and the sentence that follows, or it can be overtly encoded by the complementizer *che* ‘that’:

- 7) Speaker field in LP
 [HP[Spec MF *guarda te* [MirP]]]H0/*che* ...*sentence*]

The proposal accounts for a number of facts. The linearization requirement between the *guarda te* and the selected sentence is satisfied. The head H encodes the syntax, semantics, and prosody of the discourse marker and constitutes *le trait d’union* between context, speaker, and sentence. Finally, our proposal further supports Cinque’s (2008) program of encoding discourse within syntax.

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