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Ma che cavolo! ('What the hell!')
On The Syntactic Encoding Of Secondary
Interjections in Standard Italian

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Table of Contents

Abstract	3
1. Introduction	7
2. Interjection: An Attempted Definition	8
2.1 Interjection: An Historical and Neglected Linguistic Enigma	8
2.1.1 The Present Study.....	11
2.2 Interjections vs. Other Elements.....	12
2.3 Interjections: A Holophrastic Signal.....	13
2.3.1 Interjections, Elliptical Sentences and Pro-sentences: The Importance of The Context.....	15
2.4 Interjections and Their Use	17
2.5 Classification.....	18
2.6 Morphological and Phonological Classification.....	19
2.6.1 Primary and Secondary Interjections	19
2.6.2 Univocal and Plurivocal Interjections	20
2.6.3 Primary Univocal and Derived Univocal Interjections.....	21
2.6.4 Crystalized and Semi-Productive Plurivocal Interjections.....	21
2.6.5 Interjectional Phrases	22
2.7 The Meaning of Interjections and Their Functional Classification	22
2.8 The Syntax of Interjections.....	24
3. The Theoretical Background	25
3.1 Minimalism.....	26
3.2. Cartography	29
3.2.1 Towards Cartography	29
3.2.2 Cartography	31
3.2.3 Cartography and Minimalism	32
3.3 The Left Periphery of The Sentence.....	33
4. On the Syntactic Encoding of Italian Secondary Interjections	37
4.1 The Need for a Syntactic Analysis of Interjections.....	38
4.2 A Syntactic Classification of Interjections	39
4.3 <i>Cavolo</i> as an Interjection.....	40
4.3.1 <i>Cavolo!</i>	42
4.3.2 <i>Ma che cavolo!</i>	46
4.3.3 Observations on the Relationship Between the Venetian and Paduan Dialects and <i>Cavolo</i>	50
4.4 <i>Davvero</i> as an Interjection.....	53

4.4.1 <i>Davvero</i> as an Interrogative Interjection	55
4.4.2 <i>Davvero</i> as an Informative Interjection.....	57
4.4.3 Observations on the Relationship Between the Venetian and Paduan Dialects and <i>Davvero</i>	59
5. Conclusions	61
Acknowledgments	64
References	67
Tables	73

Abstract

A volte quelle strutture così semplici e spontanee utilizzate quotidianamente nella comunicazione orale possono rivelarsi dei veri grattacapi quando si desidera analizzarle dal punto di vista linguistico. Questo è quello che è successo durante la stesura di questo elaborato, inizialmente nato per un interesse quasi ludico dopo la lettura di *Parolacce. Perché le diciamo, che cosa significano, quali effetti hanno* (2016) di Vito Tartamella.

La curiosità solleticata da questo testo per un fenomeno così diffuso e al contempo così ignorato dalla linguistica teorica ha portato alla nascita del presente lavoro. Come accade spesso però, tra il semplice osservare gli elementi e il cercare di descriverli, beh, la strada è ardua. Dal punto di vista di un semplice studioso in erba si è coscienti di dover fornire specifiche e complesse spiegazioni nei confronti dei comportamenti di certe strutture. Tuttavia, spesso si tende a dimenticare che dietro a delle semplici parole come le interiezioni si cela un mondo – in questo specifico caso, si cela un vero e proprio enigma alla quale gli studiosi stanno ancora cercando di fornire una spiegazione comune.

Come affermato in precedenza, le interiezioni sono state per molto tempo ignorate nell'ambito della linguistica teorica. Il loro comportamento inusuale e le difficoltà ad esse associate rappresentano una sorta di rompicapo grammaticale sul quale la comunità linguistica si arrovella sin dai tempi degli antichi Greci e Romani (Viljamaa, 2019). Infatti, già gli Antichi riconobbero le particolarità di queste parole e ne sottolinearono tre caratteristiche principali non condivise con altre categorie grammaticali: a) l'inclusione di parole non appartenenti propriamente alla lingua considerata, b) la loro capacità di comunicare stati mentali ed emotivi del parlante e c) la capacità di piegare le regole sintattiche. La caratteristica forse più anomala di tali elementi è la loro capacità di costituire di per sé degli interi atti linguistici. La conseguente impossibilità di poter inserire tali parole all'interno del panorama della categorizzazione tradizionale ha portato la comunità linguistica a porsi con un atteggiamento di indifferenza generale.

Tale atteggiamento si è prolungato per molti secoli e solo attorno agli anni Ottanta e Novanta del ventesimo secolo la ricerca ha ripreso a scavare attorno a questo mistero linguistico. Nonostante il rinnovato interesse, la letteratura prodotta finora sembra essere più concentrata nel fornire descrizioni di tipo semantico che altro. Tutt'oggi, ancora poco analizzati sono i comportamenti pragmatici e ancor meno lo sono i comportamenti sintattici. Quasi del tutto inesistenti sono gli studi focalizzati sulle analisi di singole interiezioni e le configurazioni nelle quali queste appaiono.

Il presente elaborato si pone quindi all'interno di questo panorama scarsamente esplorato. Dato il lungo dibattito specialmente in ambito semantico sulla natura delle interiezioni – la loro capacità o meno di codificare messaggi o la loro stessa appartenenza al

linguaggio – e l'impossibilità di poter raggruppare queste parole secondo criteri morfologici, fonetici e fonologici, ho reputato che l'unica via percorribile fosse appunto quella sintattica.

Vista la frequenza d'uso, l'importanza di tali parole nella comunicazione orale e la loro attestazione in tutte le lingue, ho ritenuto inimmaginabile considerare le interiezioni al di fuori del linguaggio. Come affermato da Jovanović (2004), elementi così pervasivi dei quali facciamo esperienza ogni giorno non possono essere considerati degli "emarginati". Almeno non quando una buona padronanza di una lingua si descriva anche attraverso il saper correttamente interpretare ed utilizzare le interiezioni.

Sebbene non si esprima sulla capacità o meno delle interiezioni di incapsulare e trasmettere messaggi, questo elaborato ambiziosamente mira a reintegrare tali elementi nel linguaggio attraverso la descrizione dei loro comportamenti sintattici. Tale percorso di "reintegrazione" delle interiezioni si è avvalso sia delle considerazioni empiriche fornite da parlanti italofoni e dialettalofoni abitanti le zone suburbane delle province di Padova e Venezia, sia di studi sintattici sperimentali. In pieno spirito cartografico, studi sull'estensione della teoria della periferia sinistra oltre la proiezione di Force hanno reso possibile la nascita di una nuova ipotesi secondo la quale il comportamento anomalo delle interiezioni sia in parte dovuto al loro essere generate molto in alto rispetto alla struttura sintattica. In particolare, gli studi di Munaro (2019; 2022) sulla categorizzazione delle interiezioni secondo il loro comportamento sintattico e le ipotesi rispetto alle strutture proiettate, e gli studi di Giorgi (2010; 2018) sulle proiezioni di Speaker e Discourse sono stati di fondamentale aiuto durante l'analisi e la formulazione di questa ipotesi.

Utilizzando in maniera combinatoria la teoria del Minimalismo e la ricerca cartografica, si sono analizzate due interiezioni secondarie utilizzate nell'Italiano standard, ossia *cavolo* e *davvero*. Dalle osservazioni dei comportamenti di *cavolo* e *davvero* e delle strutture nelle quali appaiono, ho potuto constatare che queste vengono analizzate sempre a livello del CP, ossia quella parte della struttura sintattica che mette in relazione la frase con il contesto (Rizzi, 1997). Questa osservazione rappresenta un comportamento atteso in quanto le interiezioni posseggono di base una natura deittica, suscettibile inoltre al contesto di enunciazione. Nel caso di *cavolo* tale comportamento è inoltre sottolineato dal contorno prosodico con il quale tale parola viene pronunciata, ossia con un tono esclamativo, che verrebbe generato o salirebbe fino alla proiezione di Force (Rizzi, 1997). Considerando queste osservazioni, è ipotizzabile che le interiezioni vengano generate almeno in questa posizione e che salgano successivamente per verificare altri tratti in proiezioni superiori, come ad esempio le coordinate spazio-temporali del parlante in SpeakerP. L'unica eccezione a questa regola sarebbe ipoteticamente rappresentata dall'interiezione interrogativa *davvero?* per la quale ipotizzo una generazione all'altezza della testa di IntForceP a verificare il tratto e l'intonazione interrogativa.

Scendendo in dettaglio nell'analisi di *cavolo*, Poggi (1981; 2009; 2022) classifica questa interiezione sia come informativa che ottativa. La lettura olofrastica di tale parola viene utilizzata in contesti in cui i parlanti forniscono una conferma, esprimono sorpresa o dispiacere oppure imprecano. Almeno in italiano standard, *cavolo* rappresenta un'eccezione rispetto all'ambito di enunciazione, in quanto è possibile udirla anche in situazioni formali in sostituzione del più sgarbata ed informale *cazzo*.

Secondo la classificazione sintattica di Munaro (2019; 2022) *cavolo* apparterebbe al secondo gruppo, ossia a quelle interiezioni che possono apparire sia isolate tramite una pausa sintattica, sia connesse alla frase tramite un complementatore. In presenza del complementatore, *cavolo* appare esclusivamente in posizione iniziale, mentre pronunciata in isolamento può comparire in posizione iniziale o finale. Come affermato in precedenza, durante l'analisi si è potuto notare come l'interiezione sia generata all'interno della testa di ForceP per poi osservarne la salita verso altre proiezioni poste più in alto per verificare alcuni tratti – come la valutazione da parte del parlante in EvaluativeP o le coordinate spazio-temporali in SpeakerP.

Si sono osservate anche altre possibili strutture nelle quali *cavolo* appare insieme ad altri elementi, ossia accompagnato da interiezioni primarie, elementi *wh-* e l'elemento *ma* avversativo. A seconda delle strutture analizzate, si è osservato come l'interiezione si posizioni sempre nella parte più alta della struttura sintattica, attratta anche dalle forti relazioni che questa intrattiene con gli altri elementi.

Lo studio di *davvero* si è rivelato essere un grattacapo in quanto la parola di per sé appartiene alla categoria avverbale, tuttavia è possibile utilizzarla anche come interiezione. Secondo Poggi (1981; 2009; 2022), tale interiezione rappresenterebbe sia un'interiezione informativa che un'interiezione interrogativa, utilizzata dai parlanti per confermare o chiedere conferma di un evento o situazione.

Munaro (2019; 2022) classifica *davvero* tra le interiezioni appartenenti al terzo gruppo, ossia quelle interiezioni che possono apparire solo in isolamento, precedendo o seguendo la frase. In seguito alle supposizioni e lo studio di *davvero* sia come interiezione interrogativa che informativa, questa affermazione risulterebbe vera nel caso del *davvero* interrogativo, ma non così chiara nel caso del *davvero* informativo.

Un grande ostacolo che non ha permesso l'approfondimento di questo aspetto è stato dovuto alla mancanza di strumenti che permettessero un'analisi specifica della prosodia con la quale i parlanti pronuncerebbero tale interiezione. Per questo motivo, salvo futuri approfondimenti, ho preferito considerare e analizzare il *davvero* informativo solo quando questo appare in isolamento, prodotto dopo una richiesta di conferma da parte dell'interlocutore.

Nel caso di *davvero* interrogativo, data l'indubbia intonazione, ho supposto che questo venga prodotto in una parte inferiore del CP, probabilmente nella testa di IntForceP dove gli elementi verificherebbero i propri tratti interrogativi. Solo successivamente salirebbe fino alla posizione di SpeechAct° come ipotizzato da Munaro (2019; 2022).

Come nel caso di *cavolo*, anche per questa interiezione si sono studiate diverse strutture in cui *davvero* si trova abbinato a interiezioni primarie o al *ma* avversativo, ritrovando risultati simili a quelli già osservati per *cavolo*.

Alla fine di ogni analisi, dato il bilinguismo italiano-dialetto dei parlanti nell'area in cui è svolta questa ricerca, si è ritenuto interessante fornire brevi cenni e descrizioni per ognuna delle interiezioni considerate. In alcuni casi il parallelismo con l'Italiano standard ha riportato un'identità nei comportamenti delle interiezioni, specialmente nel caso di *cavolo*. Altre volte invece – come nel caso di *davvero* usato come interiezione interrogativa – si sono notate delle preferenze nette da parte dei dialetti per altre strutture.

In conclusione, sottolineo che né la scelta delle interiezioni, né della lingua sono state arbitrarie. Come affermato sopra, durante il processo di analisi della letteratura prodotta sulle interiezioni, oltre alla scarsità di materiale di stampo pragmatico e sintattico, ho potuto notare la quasi totale assenza di studi focalizzati su singole interiezioni. Estremamente rari sono dunque anche gli studi sulle interiezioni in specifiche lingue o dialetti.

Denotata la povertà in termini di materiale prodotto in questo senso, consapevoli del lungo dibattito in ambito semantico, auspico che in futuro la comunità accademica si concentri maggiormente su questi aspetti meno analizzati. Con una buona dose di probabilità e tempo, l'unione di lavori prodotti in diversi ambiti e su diverse lingue potrebbero essere la chiave per risolvere l'enigma delle interiezioni.

1. Introduction

Sometimes just because a phenomenon is complex, or it has not been widely studied or scarcely considered, it does not mean that it is not worthy of further attention. This has been the case with interjections which have been mistreated, almost ostracized by theoretical linguists for a long time. Fortunately, the way this phenomenon has been considered changed radically, though slowly, in the second half of the twentieth century, and nowadays scholars seem to be attracted more and more by this linguistic enigma. In alignment with this newly found interest, this dissertation focuses exactly on the description and analysis of interjections.

The difficulties surrounding interjections have been first recognized by the grammarians of Ancient Rome (Viljamaa, 2019). Despite the passing of the centuries, the greatest obstacle is still represented by the impossibility of inserting interjections within any of the known grammatical classes. They seem to share some characteristics, but of course their distinctive traits in the end make a final categorization impossible, at least as the terms of traditional grammar are concerned (Cuenca, 2000). Among interjections in fact, we find words which do not follow the phonetic and phonological constraints of the language taken into consideration and, at the same time, this group presents those same words which belong in the lexicon, as well as locutions (Ameka 1992; 2006, Poggi 1981; 2009; 2022). In this sense they lack formal homogeneity (Jovanović, 2004). Interjections show independence with respect to the syntactic structure of the sentence and convey messages concerning the state of mind or emotions on the speaker's part. Finally, Poggi (2022) explained that the deictic nature of these elements underlines the importance of the context of utterance. In order to achieve a full comprehension of the uttered interjections, the listener must share the same communicative situation of the speaker.

Given this panorama, one may ask whether it is useful or not to study such a singularity which seems to be partially ineffable. As mentioned in the first paragraph, interjections are getting more and more attention in modern research. Since James' PhD dissertation *The Syntax and Semantics of Some English Interjections* appeared in 1973 – the first study that actually and finally considered interjections as elements belonging in language – the majority of the works have concentrated their efforts on the description of these structures as far as the pragmatic and semantic fields are concerned. But as Wharton (2003) affirms, explanations especially on a conceptualist level rest on an unstable ground.

On the other side, apart from a few interesting observations on the positions which interjections occupy in the sentence, studies on the syntax of interjections are extremely rare and still experimental. It is exactly in this specific experimental panorama that this dissertation finds itself at home. The aim of the next pages will be in fact to try and analyze a

few standard Italian structures in the light of the syntactic analysis proposed by Munaro (2019; 2022) in his works on specific Italian dialects. Munaro's works on their turn can be inserted within a wider theoretical panorama which includes Minimalism, Cartography and the theory of the left periphery of the sentence proposed by Rizzi (1997) and Rizzi & Bocci (2017). Despite the apparent clash of ideals, Minimalism and cartographic research can indeed be used simultaneously. The minimalist program and Cartography developed around the same years, and while the former is concerned with the generating devices, the latter is more interested in the details of the generated structures. According to Cinque & Rizzi (2008), these two objectives that can be pursued together in that Cartography and Minimalism share the same interest for the interfaces.

As far as the structure of this dissertation is concerned, Chapter 1 represents the introduction to the topic. Chapter 2 is to be considered a brief compendium on the issues surrounding interjections as it tries to explain the behavior of this phenomenon as the existing literature has described it. In this Chapter, it is fundamental to underline how much Poggi's (1981; 2009; 2022) works have contributed to the development and analysis of these structures as far as the Italian language is concerned, especially in the semantic and pragmatic fields. Chapter 3 again contains a resume of the theoretical background supporting the analysis of Chapter 4. Chapter 4, as just said, includes the analysis of some structures containing secondary interjections such as *cavolo* and *davvero* and some brief considerations on their relationship in respect to Venetian and Paduan dialects. Chapter 5 simply includes the conclusion.

2. Interjection: An Attempted Definition

2.1 Interjection: An Historical and Neglected Linguistic Enigma

The second chapter of this dissertation will be devoted to the description of interjections with a particular focus on standard Italian. As underlined in the title, there is no intention to provide a definitive definition of this phenomenon, rather the aim is that of offering an overview of the theories and explanations that have been proposed so far in the literature concerning the behavior of interjections. The reason behind this choice is to be found in the literature itself as explained in the following paragraphs.

Interjections seem to be pervasive especially in an informal speech situation, but despite their abundant distribution, many scholars complain that theoretical linguistics has not paid enough attention to these items, which are still not sufficiently described (Downing & Caro, 2019). The current state of art regarding interjections though, is not only due to the

lack of academic interest or efforts. Another factor that has contributed in building such an environment is of course the very nature of these items.

Viljamaa (1997; 2019) briefly explains that this negligence is a consequence of two main factors. On one side, these lexical elements show a considerable freedom in respect to syntactic positioning, and their being independent in respect to the sentence may be due to their lack of formal and semantic homogeneity. On the other side, there are the “word-oriented language theory of Greco-Roman grammatical art (*ars grammatica*) and grammarians’ insistence on categorising formal elements (words) of language according to their behaviour in the sentence structure [...] (*partes orationis*)”¹ (Viljamaa, 2019, p.219). In addition to this, Downing & Caro (2019), Poggi (1981), Jovanović (2004), Norrick (2009) and O’Connell et al. (2007) point out that interjections have also often been confused with other elements such as adverbs, discourse markers, onomatopoeias and exclamations². The overall framework as Cuenca (2000), Cruz (2017) and Downing & Caro (2019) reported seems to underline that one of the biggest issues surrounding this phenomenon is that interjections represent a challenge as far as the satisfaction of all those conditions that fall within the traditional model of categorization is concerned. In plain terms this means that the problem with interjections arises in the effort of trying to provide a grammatical definition and definitive categorization, since these elements do not seem to fit exactly in any of the known grammatical classes³. More than this, as underlined by many scholars, a single interjection actually constitutes an utterance by itself which expresses the emotional state or the state of mind of the utterer⁴. Among the nine parts of the speech as they are described in the traditional grammars, interjections indeed are the only category which is based on holophrastic language⁵ and resembles more non-verbal languages rather than the articulated

¹ Emphasis in the original.

² On this issue Poggi (1981) suggests the reading of Karceoski, S. (1941). Introduction à l'étude de l'interjection. *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*, (1), 57-75.

³ Ameka (1992) and Cuenca (2000) highlight that interjections actually share some characteristics of certain grammatical classes although, as said in the text, in the end they cannot be inserted in any of those classes due to their peculiarities.

For a more in depth reading on grammatical classes see also Schachter, P., & Shopen, T. (2007). Parts-of-speech systems. In T. Shopen (Ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description* (pp. 1-60). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴ Poggi (1981) attributes the discovery of this specific characteristic of interjections to the Austrian linguist Leo Spitzer, who described this phenomenon in his book *Italienische Umgangssprache* (Kurt Schroeder, Bonn 1922).

⁵ According to Poggi (2009) communicative acts based on holophrastic language contain both a performative and a propositional content. That is the propositional content regards the mental state of the speaker, or a request to the listener/third entity. The performative content is concerned with the type of communicative action, i.e. the goal the speaker wants to achieve (inform, request, asking about, wishing etc.) based on the propositional content. In this sense it is possible to distinguish between holophrastic language and articulated one in that words belonging to holophrastic language can be considered entire sentences since their meaning is codified in the lexicon. Words belonging in the articulated language instead partially convey the speech act, i.e. they only concern the propositional content or the performative content.

one (Poggi, 1981). In this regard, as reported by Ameka (2006), the dualistic nature of interjections as lexemes and utterances affects grammarians as well as lexicographers and those scholars interested in pragmatics.

Despite the obstacles set by these structures, Ameka (1992), Dingemanse (2021), Poggi (2009) and Viljamaa (2019) recognize that the fascination with interjections goes a long way back in time. Greek grammarians were indeed the first ones who provided a rough categorization. They intuitively acknowledged that there was something unusual in such structures, although in the end the odd behavior of interjections seemed not to bother the grammarians too much and they just inserted these elements within the heterogeneous class of adverbs.

From the etymology of the word, it may be plausible to think that the effort of trying and categorizing interjections has its roots in Roman times. The very term interjection indeed comes from the Latin *interiectio*, *-onis* “insertion” or “intercalation”, that on its turn comes from the verb *intericere* “to throw in the middle” (Bongi, 2003). The term itself resumes one of the most noticeable properties of this phenomenon, i.e., the possibility of the word or the expression used as an interjection to be inserted in the middle of the sentence or the discourse⁶. The Latins were also the first ones who casted light on some of the distinguishing features of this phenomenon. Diomedes, a grammarian who lived in the fourth century AD, defined them as “ ‘pars orationis significans mentis affectum voce incondita’, a part of the speech signifying an emotion by means of an incondite word” (Viljamaa, 2019, p.220). Beside their ability of disrupting the syntax, i.e. their independence in respect to the sentence or the discourse, the Latins observed that interjections also include non-words and signify emotions or states of mind.

Due to time constraints this paper will not go into further details on the history of interjections, rather the discussion will move its focus directly to the status of modern research⁷.

Due to their ability of encapsulating and delivering messages concerning emotions or states of mind, a lot of studies on interjections have been conducted in the psychological-emotional field rather than in the linguistic one (Ameka 1992, Cuenca 2000, Goddard 2014a, Jovanović 2004, Marabini 2019, O’Connell et al. 2007, Poggi 1981). In this sense, linguistic research on these structures is still at the beginning; Wharton (2003) explains that during the nineteenth century, the majority of the scholars did not consider interjections as part of the language,

Ameka (1992), Dingemanse (2021), Goddard (2014a) and Poggi (2009) also argue that due to the deployment of this kind of language, interjections have been associated with primitive forms of expressions.

⁶ Dingemanse (2021) says that actually the term interjection was used by the Latins for all those words which were not easily described or showed odd, devious behavior.

⁷ For a more in depth reading on the history of interjections see also Viljamaa (1997; 2019).

and they did not demonstrate any interest in giving further explanations⁸. However, despite the general indifference demonstrated by scholars in the last century, during the nineteen seventies⁹ and in the nineteen eighties this tendency suffered an interruption. As summarized by Wharton (2003), modern research has reached a dichotomy as far as viewpoints on this issue is concerned. Nowadays research is split between a more conceptualist view supported by scholars such as Ameka (1992), Wierzbicka (1992) and Wilkins (1992), who incorporate interjections as part of language and try to explain this phenomenon through complex semantic analysis, and a “negationist” perspective proposed by Goffman (1981) who denies their participation in language and analyzes these items just in terms of socio-communicative roles¹⁰.

2.1.1 The present study

Of the two opposite views briefly introduced at the end of the previous section, this paper cannot support the conceptualist perspective entirely because of the flaws that a pure semantic analysis of these items involves¹¹. Nevertheless, this dissertation rejects a theoretical perspective that just excludes interjections from any belonging in human language. “The fact that interjections exist in language sufficiently accounts for their importance” (Jovanović, 2004, p.18). Besides this, interjections are actually attested in every single language (Schachter & Shopen 2007, Viljamaa 2019) and their massive presence in speech all around the world cannot be just coincidental. Jovanović finally observes that interjections are “communicative elements” (2004, p.18) and in being so a true master of a language cannot be defined as such unless he or she is not able to properly understand and correctly use interjections.

Regarding the point of view adopted in this paper, this dissertation cannot but support the evidence mentioned before and in doing so interjections will be considered part of language. As already affirmed in the introductory chapter and in the previous section, the first part of this work will propose interjections as they have been illustrated by the literature, i.e. through semantic and/or pragmatic descriptions. Nonetheless, the true focus and the models used in order to explain the phenomenon will be those of Minimalism and Cartography which will be

⁸ Viljamaa (2019) clarifies that this attitude of negligence and indifference towards interjections is a model scholars inherited from the Renaissance period. In those times interjections were considered primitive, natural forms of expression and in being so scholars denied their belonging in language.

⁹ A pioneer study of those years which is worth mentioning is James, D. M. (1973). *The Syntax and Semantics of Some English Interjections*. University of Michigan.

¹⁰ The term inserted in quotation marks is mine.

¹¹ For a better comprehension of the debate on the conceptual approach on interjections see also Cruz (2009a; 2009b) and Wharton (2003).

better explained in Chapter 3 and 4¹². According to these approaches, every structure uttered by the speakers is actually mediated by syntax as far as the sensorimotor (sound) and conceptual interfaces (meaning) are concerned. From this perspective, interjections must be expressed in syntax and in being so they cannot but be part of language. Although the effort will be that of demonstrating how interjections occupy specific positions in the left periphery of the sentence as analyzed by Munaro (2019; 2022), the adoption of this point of view is to be considered experimental since studies in this sense are still deemed approximate (Marchetiello, 2021).

2.2 Interjections vs. Other Elements

In section 2.1 it has been mentioned that interjections have been often confused with other elements. Before attempting a description of interjections, it is worth making some distinction among interjections, adverbs, discourse markers, exclamations and onomatopoeias.

Cuenca (2000) and Ameka (2006) point out that adverbs and interjections share one main characteristic, i.e. their being morphologically invariable¹³. Cuenca (2000) objects that the fact that these structures share this feature is not sufficient to affirm that they behave similarly. This invariability though is something that other categories such as prepositions, conjunctions or determiners show. The scholar then continues affirming that adverbs and interjections display differences as far as their syntactic behavior is concerned. For instance, interjections are syntactically independent, they are not constituents but entire utterances.

This last observation on the syntactic behavior of interjections led Ameka (1992) and Cuenca (2000) to distinguish between interjections and discourse markers. Apart for their syntactical independence, both scholars agree on the fact that discourse markers refer to a function which does not belong specifically only to the group of interjection, but “can be developed by items belonging to different categories” as Cuenca (2000, p.31) reports from Evans (1992). Ameka (2006) continues by affirming that some interjections can be used as discourse markers and, when used as such, they mark the boundaries as discourse units.

Poggi (1981) highlights that the confusion surrounding interjections, exclamations and onomatopoeias is due to the fact that these elements are perceived as overlapping. Interjections can be uttered using an exclamative intonation, while most of the primary interjections¹⁴ deploy the same phonetic sequences of onomatopoeias.

¹² For an introductory reading on Minimalism theory, see van Gelderen, E. (2017). *Syntax: An Introduction to Minimalism*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

¹³ On the morphology of interjection see also section 2.6.

¹⁴ On the categorization of interjections see also section 2.6.1.

Regarding the exclamations, both Poggi (1981) and Jovanović (2004) hypothesize that every word or sentence can be uttered using an exclamative intonation given the right circumstances. This of course includes interjections, especially imprecations and those expressing surprise. But of course, uttering an interjection using this particular intonation is not sufficient to label interjections as exclamations. Jovanović (2004) believes that the main distinction between interjections and exclamations lies in the function, purpose and communicative value. However, despite the evidence the scholar himself provided, Jovanović (2004) affirms that the difference between these two phenomena is not so clear.

Regarding the similarities with onomatopoeias, according to Ameka (2006) interjections express concepts while onomatopoeias are descriptive elements, while Poggi (1981) explains that there is no real juxtaposition between these two elements. Some interjections can resemble onomatopoeias but, as it will be discussed in the next section, interjections represent complete speech acts, while onomatopoeias are considered simple lexical entries. For example, an interjection such as *uffa!* may recall the gesture of snoring produced by someone who feels bored, tired or bothered. The difference is that *uffa!* actually means “I am tired”, or “I am bored” or again “This bothers me”. The same analysis cannot be applied with onomatopoeias because they do not convey any particular meaning.

2.3 Interjections: A Holophrastic Signal

As already affirmed in section 2.1, one of the few features scholars agree on when debating about interjections is their ability of constituting an utterance by themselves. According to Poggi (1981; 2009; 2022) this is possible because interjections rely on a peculiar kind of language, the holophrastic language, as opposed to the articulated one which represents the kind of language the speaker tends to use the most in his or her speech. The proof that these elements are indeed holophrastic signals, i.e. they represent a complete speech act, is easily demonstrated by the fact that in order to provide a synonym the speaker cannot but use an entire utterance. If a speaker says for example something like *ehi!*, this can only be paraphrased as “I am asking you to pay attention”. In this sense, there is no single word whose meaning equals exactly the one conveyed in *ehi!*. To quote Poggi:

an interjection is a codified signal, that is, a perceivable signal – a sound sequence in the speech modality, and a sequence of graphemes in the written modality – which is linked in a stable way, in the minds of the speakers of a language, to the meaning of a speech act, that is, to information including both performative and propositional content”. (Poggi, 2009, p.171)

One may ask what the point is in producing interjections rather than uttering entire sentences and achieving the same meaning. Dingemanse (2017) and Poggi (1981) interestingly highlight that while immersed in a conversation, it is useful on the part of the listener to actively signal his or her being engaged in the conversation. That is, the listener sometimes lets the speaker know that he or she is paying attention to what is being said, understands it, and that he or she agrees or disagrees with the speaker. The production of short, codified speech acts is more productive in terms of fluidity than complex and articulated sentences. Though obtaining the same objective, the deployment of “classical” sentences would result in a heavier and more monotone load on the conversation’s part. This particular issue will be discussed also in section 2.4.

Cruz (2009a) objects the ability of interjections to encode concepts. In his analysis the scholar points out that it is almost impossible to provide an exact correspondence between the uttered interjection and its interpretation on the part of the listener. As he explains:

Even if the speaker had a very precise informative intention [...] the hearer has to resort to inference in order to interpret interjectional utterances, and the result of his deductions may significantly differ from the speaker’s actual informative intention. The meaning of these and many other interjections is inextricably related to the context in which they are produced. It if it may be difficult to assign a peculiar meaning to interjections when they are intentionally produced in overt communication, this difficulty significantly increases when it comes to assign meaning to those interjections that arise spontaneously or unpremeditatedly, as impulsive reactions to certain stimuli, and the hearer is not aware of contextual factors affecting their production. (Cruz, 2009a, p.244)

Of the two points of view as they have been presented by Cruz (2009a) and Poggi (2009; 2022) this paper agrees with what the latter scholar believes, i.e. it supports the idea of interjections as codified signals. Cruz’s (2009a) take on interjections can be applied to every situation which involves any level of comprehension. Comprehension – whatever meaning or degree one attaches to this word – is always a multifactorial matter. Partially in agreement with the final remarks in his study, it can be argued that more than just a specific concept, interjections actually activate a broader range of concepts that the listener then narrows down and interprets according to the context of utterance.

However, the analysis proposed by Cruz (2009a) casts light on other two interesting issues. The first one is that interjections necessarily present differences among languages¹⁵ (Cruz 2009a, Cuenca 2000, Dingemanse 2021, Goddard 2014a, Jovanović 2004, Marabini 2019, Schachter & Shopen 2007, Wierzbicka 1992, Zamora & Alessandro 2016), and the second one is that the context in which they are pronounced is fundamental for the listener to properly interpret the interjection (Ameka 2006, Cruz 2009a, Marabini 2019, Poggi 1981; 2009; 2022). Let us hypothesize a situation like the one proposed in example (1) in which the two interlocutors do not share the same communicative context.

(1) Oh!

Interjection

The listener would probably comprehend that the speaker is surprised, but since he or she is not given the context in which the interjection is uttered, nor is offered any other kind of paralinguistic remark, the interlocutor might be unable to understand the reason why the speaker shows this particular reaction.

In her monographic work on interjections, Poggi (2022) identifies three main elements that contribute in building the meaning of interjections. The first one is the presence of a deictic element, i.e., the communicative situation in which the interjection is uttered, the *hic et nunc* of the speaker. The second element is the illocutionary value which distinguishes the different uses as far as the pragmatic level is concerned. The last element is the propositional content which provides information about the emotional state or the state of mind of the speaker, and at the same time it links the latter to the context of utterance.

2.3.1 Interjections, Elliptical Sentences and Pro-sentences: The Importance of The Context

In order to provide a better comprehension on the issue of the deployment of holophrastic language and how the context influences the interpretation of interjections, it may be useful to make a few comparisons. Aside from interjections, there are other structures in linguistics that can be associated with the holophrastic language and behave similarly. These structures are elliptical sentences and pro-sentences.

¹⁵ This dissertation will not go into further details on the difficulties or peculiarity of interjections among different languages. However, the cited works can be useful for a better understanding of interjections in the translation field.

Poggi (2009) underlines that “an elliptical sentence conveys a different speech act in every different context” and she clearly explains it through examples as in sentence (2) and (3)¹⁶.

(2) A gets into a pub and the barman asks him: “What do you want?”

B answers: “Beer.”

Beer in this context means that the customer wants the barman to pour him beer. As said above, elliptical sentences are based on holophrastic language, therefore they represent a speech act and in order to provide a synonym the speaker must pronounce an entire sentence. So, if the customer of example (2) had to use an entire utterance to answer the question, he or she would have said something like “I would like some beer”.

In example (3) the word used is the same as in example (2) but the scenario in which *beer* is uttered is completely different.

(3) B is walking with his friend A, while passing along the walls of a big old factory, A asks B: “What did they produce in this factory?”

B answers: “Beer.”

Again, if speaker B had to use a synonym in order to achieve the same meaning, he or she would have pronounced something like “In this factory they used to produce beer”.

The difference between interjections and elliptical sentences lies in their behavior with respect to the context of utterance. As already affirmed, both structures convey complete speech acts, but while the speech act in elliptical sentences changes as the context changes, the speech act conveyed in interjections remains identical (Poggi, 2009). So, despite the deployment of the same holophrastic language, interjections convey the same speech act in every single case because they are codified signals.

A similar discussion can be done in a comparison between interjections and pro-sentences. “The propositional context of a pro-sentence is not lexicalized, but it changes depending on the context.” (Poggi, 2022, p.407)¹⁷. Pro-sentences *yes* and *no* just “set the polarity to a sentence in the immediately preceding context” (Poggi, 2022, p.407)¹⁸. Again, the conclusion is the same as the one said for elliptical sentences.

A final and maybe redundant observation within this comparison among elliptical sentences, pro-sentences and interjections is that elliptical sentences and pro-sentences do not inform the listener about the emotional state or state of mind of the speaker.

¹⁶ Both examples (2) and (3) are taken from Poggi (2009).

¹⁷ English translation from Italian *mine*.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

2.4 Interjections and Their Use

In addition to what already affirmed on the deictic nature of interjections, it has been observed that they are always pronounced in the present tense speech and they are most common in informal speech situations (Marabini 2019, Poggi 2022, Zamora & Alessandro 2016). Regarding their presence in written texts, Lindbladh (2011) and O'Connell et al. (2007) point out that interjections can also be found in this specific environment, although when they are present, they are to be found almost exclusively in dialogues, i.e. that literary adaptation for real life conversation¹⁹.

As discussed above, in order to correctly interpret an interjection, the listener must know or share the *hic et nunc* of the speaker. Interjections are actually produced during a conversation between two interlocutors which, of course, share the same communicative context²⁰. Beside the context, Ameka (1992; 2006), Cruz (2009a), Dingemans (2021) and Marabini (2019) interestingly observe that there are also other extra-linguistic elements that contribute to the understanding of interjections such as body position, grimaces or facial expressions, gestures and specific prosodic features²¹.

Regarding the production of interjections in informal speech situations, Poggi (2022) explains that there are at least three main reasons behind this behavior. As repeated many times by now, interjections convey ideas on the state of mind of the speaker. Expressing emotions, feelings or subjective states is something that normally distinguishes formal and informal situations in which the speaker tends to avoid subjective readings.

The second reason concerns what Poggi called “the expressive immediacy” (2022, p.410) of these communicative acts. Primary interjections are composed of short words, mostly monosyllabic ones, which allow for a faster and more immediate communication. This lack of complexity that instead characterizes the articulated language is indeed what makes these words easy to produce and interpret. But as Poggi points out, this kind of “expressive immediacy of interjections is incompatible [...] with formal situations” (2022, p.411)²². The inherent spontaneity of interjections is something the speakers tend to avoid in formal situations, in which the conversations are much more organized and objective. Of course, in formal situations the speakers witness the production of interjections, although when these

¹⁹ Research on written interjections is still very rare and hardly investigated. A few studies presented within O'Connell et al.'s (2007) research demonstrated that the distribution and use of interjections in literary performances is different from the orality. Another study conducted by Hougaard (2019) on interjections and social media suggests that in their literary form they are used to connect emotionally with the interlocutors.

²⁰ The only exception to this context might be represented by a phone call but this dissertation did not encounter any study or research on interjections uttered in this situation.

²¹ On gestures Ameka (2006) points out the equal value existing between some interjections and gestures and that sometimes the latter can actually substitute interjections, making the division between semiotic signs and linguistic signs not so sharply defined.

²² English translation from Italian *mine*.

are present, they are usually longer words such as the utterance of *interessante!* (interesting), as opposed to *però!*

The last point underlined by the scholar is that shorter and “easier” words pronounced in informal speech allow the speakers to promptly inform the interlocutor. Again, the expressive immediacy contributes in keeping the flow of the conversation more fluid (Hougaard 2019, Poggi, 2022).

2.5 Classification

Up to now this paper has given some general notions on interjections. The following sections will be devoted to the classification and categorization of interjections based on different criteria. On this issue Cuenca (2000) rightly observes that in trying to classify and categorize interjections morphology, phonology, pragmatics and syntax are to be considered interrelated. As it will be demonstrated in the next paragraphs, this category of elements contains more irregularities than homogeneity. Last but not least, Marchetiello (2021) underlines that the division between primary and secondary interjections, as well as other semantic categorizations, are still problematic since they do not take into consideration the differences present in the same category. As it will be demonstrated in the following sections, the same interjection can actually belong to more than one category.

Since the following sections will discuss categorization and classification, Jovanović (2004) wisely points out that it is still not clear whether interjections represent an open or closed set of words. The speakers easily recognize these words and use them in their communicative act, so in a sense they are a pretty stable group. As mentioned in section 2.3, this supports the idea of interjections as codified elements. Nonetheless, the scholar observes that it seems plausible that interjections can actually include new forms or words as the cultural environment changes and adapts language to its own needs. In addition to this, it must be noted that there is evidence of borrows and exchanges of interjections among languages, as for example the borrows in modern Italian of the ancient Greek *eureka!*²³. So as far as their being considered an open or close class, Ameka (1992) and Cuenca (2000) suggest that interjections are to be deemed as a semi-open class, while Schachter & Shopen (2007) listed them under the closed class of elements. Other scholars such as Norrick (2009) are convinced that considering interjections under the pragmatic-functional perspective, this

²³ Poggi (1981) notices that when this kind of exchange of interjections happens among languages, the original meaning of the word changes as it enters and becomes an interjection in the language which acquires that word. This is the case of the Italian interjection *eureka!* whose original meaning in ancient Greek was “I found” (Garzanti Linguistica), while in Italian it expresses joy.

class can ideally accept an unlimited number of new items and for this reason he considers interjections an open class.

2.6 Morphological and Phonological Classification

The categorization presented in the following section is the one which has been proposed first by Ameka (1992) which takes into consideration the form interjections can assume based on their phonological and morphological characteristics.

Since this dissertation focuses primarily on Italian interjections, it is fundamental to mention and describe also the way in which Poggi has divided these words according to their different peculiarities in the language taken in consideration here. For this reason, in this work I decided to offer her takes on this issue which will be explained in sections 2.6.2-2.6.4.

2.6.1 Primary and Secondary Interjections

It can be generally said that interjections deploy the same phonetic and phonological system of the language (Jovanović 2004, Poggi 2022). Primary interjections are composed of mostly monosyllabic or disyllabic words which may resemble other lexemes, but despite these similarities, these interjections display some oddities which can be found in their graphic conventions that will not be explained here. Examples of this first group of interjections are: *ah!*, *boh!*, *toh!*, *beh!*, *ehi!*, *uffa!*, *dai!* etc. Ameka considers them primary because “they are not used otherwise” (1992, p.105).

Secondary interjections instead are easily recognizable because they are words that come from the lexicon of the articulated language and in being so, they maintain the phonological structure of the considered language. Examples of secondary interjections are *madonna!*, *cavolo!*, *caspita!* or *accidenti!*. Ameka labels these words as “secondary” because “[they] are forms that belong to other word classes based on their semantics and are interjections only because they can occur by themselves non-elliptically as one-word utterances.” (1992, p.105)²⁴.

As far as the morphology for both primary and secondary interjection is concerned, Ameka (1992; 2006), Cruz (2017) and Jovanović (2004) observe that interjections do not take inflection or derivation at least in those languages which use these forms. Even those interjections which are derived from verb forms, e.g. the Italian *dai!*, you (2ndpers-sing) give,

²⁴ Going back to the issue of the openness or closeness of this class, Cruz (2017) believes that secondary interjections represent the optimal ground to accommodate new material.

these do not follow the agreement rules. That is the fixed form is used both for the singular and the plural as in example (4).

(4) Dai, andate!

Come on, you-2ndpers-plur go!

As shown in the example, despite using the second person singular form of the verb, the sentence is perfectly grammatical, plus according to Ameka (1992; 2006) and Jovanović (2004) their original meaning somehow acquires a new shade.

2.6.2 Univocal and Plurivocal Interjections

Similarly to Ameka's (1992) division into primary and secondary interjections, Poggi (1981; 2009; 2022) proposes to divide interjections into univocal and plurivocal interjections. The reason behind this division has to be tracked down in the ambiguous interpretation that even holophrastic items can have. In particular, the scholar says that univocal interjections possess one or more readings which are exclusively holophrastic, while plurivocal interjections have of course an holophrastic meaning but they also possess meanings belonging in the lexicon of the articulated language. An example of univocal interjection is *ehi!* that, as explained in section 2.3, represents a request for attention and has no other meaning²⁵. An example of plurivocal interjection is *cavolo!* which in the articulated language means cabbage²⁶, but when it is used as an interjection it becomes a curse word whose meaning in English roughly resembles *jeez!*.

On this last class of interjections, interestingly Poggi says that the meanings of plurivocal interjections are somehow connected to the meaning of the word when this is not used as an holophrastic word, i.e., it is derived from the meaning the word has in the lexicon of the articulated language. She hypothesizes that the holophrastic reading has somehow been derived from the lexical one through a diachronic process²⁷.

²⁵ As reported in the text, *ehi!* is the interjection the speaker uses in order to grab someone's attention. It is also observed that this kind of interjection in Venetian Dialect is often used as a substitution of the proper name when the addresser cannot recall the latter. This side observation will not be investigated in the paper, but it still would be interesting to conduct a study on it.

²⁶ Garzanti Linguistica. (n.d.). Cavolo. In *Garzanti Linguistica*. Retrieved December 06, 2022, from <https://www.garzantilinguistica.it/ricerca/?q=cavolo>

²⁷ Regarding the diachronic process, Poggi (1981) presumes that on a timeline, the lexical meaning is the first one to appear. She imagines that the holophrastic meaning arises as the word begins to be frequently used in utterances produced in specific contexts. These sentences deal with the state of mind of the speaker in respect to what happens, or what is being said during the conversation. In order to maintain a certain fluidity and immediacy in the discourse, the speakers feel the need to condensate and codify the meaning in words which are phonetically shorter. To paraphrase this issue using

2.6.3 Primary Univocal and Derived Univocal Interjections

Within the group of univocal interjections, Poggi (1981; 2022) introduces a further distinction and distinguishes between primary univocal and derived univocal interjections.

At least in Italian, all secondary interjections are to be considered as derived since their holophrastic meaning derives from the lexical entry. Within the univocal interjections group only some of them are derived mostly from apocope forms or euphemisms. An example of this is *toh!* which is presumably the apocope of *togliere* (to move or remove). As already said for secondary interjections, also derived univocal interjections rely on the same phonetic and phonological system of the language.

As mentioned in section 2.6.1, primary univocal interjections present graphical and phonetic oddities as for example the presence of the grapheme “h” which can be found at the end of the word as in *oh!* or inserted in the middle as in *ehi!* or *ahimè!*. Again, Poggi (1981) tries to explain this peculiarity hypothesizing that these words were at the beginning onomatopoeias which suffered a similar diachronic process as explained in 2.6.2²⁸.

2.6.4 Crystallized and Semi-productive Plurivocal Interjections

In analyzing plurivocal interjections, Poggi (1981; 2022) introduces a further distinction within this group and divides them into crystallized and semi-productive plurivocal interjections.

On semi-productive plurivocal interjections, Poggi affirms that the meaning of these interjections can still be retrieved in the lexical entry primary’s reading. An example of interjection within this group is *calma* (calm) whose meaning is “I invite you to be quiet”, or “take it easy”. In simple terms, in semi-productive interjections the holophrastic meaning can be easily inferred by the lexical one.

Trying to retrieve the meaning of crystallized plurivocal interjections is a little bit more complex instead, because the holophrastic meaning is not easily retrievable from the lexical one. An example of this kind of interjection is *permesso* (excuse me). *Permesso* used as an interjection conveys a specific request, i.e. it is a request to enter in or pass through a place.

Poggi’s words, there is the need to condensate an entire speech act within a single lexical entry. Once this second meaning is crystallized, the word becomes used with the holophrastic reading. The origin of the interjectional reading of the words belonging in the category of secondary/plurivocal interjection has been tackled also by Cruz (2017).

²⁸ On this issue see also Poggi, I. (1981). Capitolo 4, Tipi di interiezioni. In Poggi, I. (Eds.), *Le interiezioni: studio del linguaggio e analisi delle mente* (p.61). Bollati Boringhieri.

2.6.5 Interjectional phrases

A final heterogeneous group is represented by the interjectional phrases (Ameka, 1992) or holophrastic phrases (Poggi, 1981). Exactly like idiomatic expressions, these kinds of interjections can be decomposed into two or more lexical entries, but by taking each lexeme singularly it is not possible to infer the meaning.

These interjectional phrases share some characteristics with the categories mentioned above, but of course they cannot be inserted within any of those groups. Poggi (1981) hypothesizes that they could be univocal interjections since they do not have any other meaning beside the holophrastic one. On the other hand, the fact that the expressions in this group are indeed composed of recognizable lexical entries would ascribe them as semi-productive plurivocal interjections.

It is worth mentioning that like primary interjections, interjectional phrases display some graphic oddities, e.g. they can be written as a single word like in *perdio!*, or be composed by two different words as in *la madonna!*.

Finally, Poggi (2009; 2022) affirms that they can be associated with idiomatic expressions, since exactly like the latter, they convey complex meaning condensed in a few words. The main difference between interjectional phrases and idiomatic expressions is again the fact that interjections are speech acts, while idiomatic expressions are predications. Nonetheless, the boundary between these two structures is still not so clear.

2.7 The Meaning of Interjections and Their Functional Classification

As said in the previous section, interjections can be classified not only taking into account their morphological and phonological forms. In the following paragraphs, this paper will propose a semantic and pragmatic classification as presented by Poggi (1981; 2009; 2022). The scholar divided interjections into four major groups: informative, interrogative, requestive and optative interjections.

Informative interjections regard those words which inform the listener about the mental state of the speaker. Examples of this group are *oh!* which transmits a state of surprise, or *uffa!* which underlines the bored status of the speaker. Informative interjections deal with the mental state of the speaker, within this group some of them provide information about the general knowledge of the speaker – the information the speaker had prior to the conversation and the ones he or she is receiving during the conversation –, others are concerned with the realization or failure of specific goals. Poggi describes informative interjections as “mind makers” (2009, p.176) since they deal with beliefs, goals, mental states and emotions. The scholar observes that informative interjections represent the only class

that actually is more concerned with the speaker. Requestive, interrogative and optative interjections relate principally to mental states, actions and events surrounding the listener.

Interrogative interjections represent a request on the part of the speaker in which he or she asks the listener to provide more information, namely confirmations or further explanations. Examples of this group are interjections such as *eh?*, *beh?* or *allora?*.

The requestive interjections group is concerned with all those requests of action on the part of the speaker, i.e. he or she requests the hearer to do something. Examples of requestive interjections are *sciò!*, *ehi!*, *pst!*, *shh!* or *alt!*. Similarly to the interrogative ones, requestive interjections are calls to action or exhortations. It is important to point out that exhortations, differently from requests for specific actions, are included in this group because despite not describing the kind of request, they invite the hearer to do, finish or repeat something. An example of exhortation is *dai!*, or *bis!* when uttered in a specific context.

The last group is represented by optative interjections. Within this group we find greetings (*buongiorno!*), wishing formulas (*auguri!*), politeness formulas (*prego*) and interjectional phrases or idioms (*in bocca al lupo*). Characteristic of this group are those interjections that can be defined as wishing formulas in which the speaker asks a third, non-physical entity to have something happen. Within this class Poggi (2009) inserts a sub-category of interjections she calls “ejaculative” which comprehend invocations and imprecations.

In order to have a better understanding on this issue, it might be useful to read Tables 1-4 in Tables section which contain a classification of interjections proposed by Poggi (2009; 2022).

Within this semantic-functional categorization, it is worth making a brief parenthetical remark. The division into informative, interrogative, requestive and optative interjections proposed by Poggi is the one that this paper found more suitable since it focuses on Italian language. As far as a pragmatic division is concerned, it is worth mentioning also the one proposed by Ameka (1992) – which in its turn adopts the set of distinctions made by Jakobson (1960) – since this division is the one which has reached a broader audience. Ameka (1992; 2006) distinguishes three types of interjections: the first group falls under the name of expressive interjections which deals with the speaker’s cognitive and emotive states. The second group is represented by the conative interjections which, exactly like the requestive interjections, invite an action or response from the part of the listener. The last group is composed of the phatic interjections that are used primarily to establish and maintain communicative contact. In this sense these interjections are used as continuers, backchannels or pragmatic markers.

2.8 The Syntax of Interjections

After having presented the overall panorama surrounding interjections, the last part of this chapter will focus on their syntactic distribution. This paper already mentioned that the odd behavior of interjections was first recognized by the Romans as they could be inserted in the middle of the sentence or the discourse. Nonetheless, Poggi (2022) in her analysis affirms that since interjections bear the meaning of an entire sentence, this has two consequences. On one hand, this grants a great level of freedom as far as positioning within the sentence is concerned. On the other hand, there are actually some restrictions on the elements interjections refers to.

She specifies that interjections can be found in isolation, e.g. *buongiorno!*, *toh!* or *miseria!* and they can be uttered in the absence of linguistic context. In addition, since they do not show any syntactic relationship with the rest of the words, the resulting independence with respect to syntactic positioning allows them to disrupt even the most basic of linguistic units, i.e. the constituents as in example (5)²⁹.

(5) Questo è il... Uhm... Castello di Trieste.

This is the...Uhm ... Castle of Trieste.

On the element the interjection refers to Poggi (2022) says that this one may not be present in the context of utterance. Anyway, when found in this specific situation, the element the interjection refers to has to be retrieved from the linguistic or extralinguistic context as explained in example (6).

(6) Speaker A sees a present under the Christmas tree and while pointing at the present, he or she pronounces: "Oh!".

Speaker B looking at speaker A pointing at the present can understand and properly interpret the interjection as "I am pleasantly surprised".

When the element the interjection refers to is mentioned in the sentence, Poggi (2022) says that there are syntactic restrictions on the parts of the sentence which can contain it. The referred element must be a constituent and it must not be a syntactic island.

Apart from the issue regarding the elements, interjections refer to, generally the position interjections can occupy within the sentence or their being pronounced in isolation is

²⁹ Poggi (2022) suggests that this happens when the interjection refers to the constituent it disrupts and even when it has nothing to do with it.

determined by their meaning³⁰. Poggi (2022) observes that those interjections are preferably pronounced at the beginning of the sentence which contains the referred element such as in example (7):

- (7) Toh, guarda chi è arrivato!
Interjection, look who's here!

Of course, it is possible to find the same interjection at the end of the sentence, but the meaning conveyed by *toh!* slightly differs from example (7).

- (8) Con chi pensi sia al telefono? Con Maurizio, toh.
Who do you think is she talking to on the phone? It's Maurizio, interjection.

Poggi (2022) notices that interjections which express surprise are usually found in initial position, while those expressing doubt or hesitations are considered ungrammatical if the speaker pronounces them at the end of the sentence as in (9):

- (9) *Potrebbe farcela, uhm?
*Could he succeed, uhm?

When they are found at the beginning of the sentence, Jovanović (2004) believes the grammatical and functional relation between interjections and other words, or sentences is looser. Looking at example (10) in fact, it can be observed that the sentence could be uttered and understood anyway even in absence of the interjection.

- (10) Ah, sei qui!
Ah, you are here!

3. The Theoretical Background

This chapter focuses on the theoretical and historical background for the analysis presented in chapter 4. For space reasons, this work will not describe these issues extensively, nor it aims to dwell on and discuss the pros and cons of the adoption of these theories. Instead, the main goal of the next sections is that of offering a short overview on Minimalism, Cartography, the left periphery of the sentence and a few additional studies which have contributed to a further development of this latter theory. By providing a short

³⁰ Nonetheless, O'Connell et al. (2007) found out that speakers tend to pronounce interjections at the beginning of the sentence most of the time. Besides this observation, Norrick (2009) notices that interjections which occupy the initial position most of the time belong to the primary group, while secondary interjections are rarely found in this position,

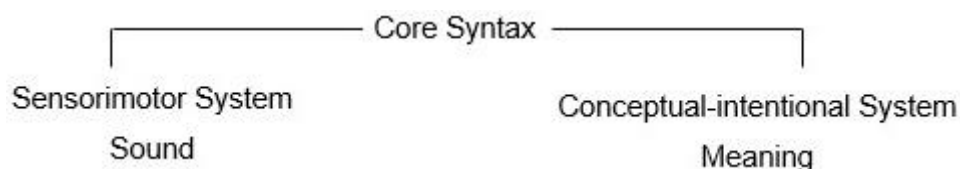
summary of the main tenets, those who are not familiar with them will hopefully achieve a better understanding of the upcoming analysis, while those who already master them could take advantage of a short review on the topics³¹.

3.1 Minimalism

The minimalist program has been first proposed by Chomsky within the broader panorama of Generative Grammar³². In his collection of works later published as *The minimalist program* in 1995, Chomsky suggested a reconsideration of the traditional view of language as the pairing of sound and meaning by introducing a third element in the equation, i.e. core syntax. That is, the sensorimotor system, which oversees the concrete phonological realization of the sentence, and the conceptual-intentional system, which is concerned with the meaning and the contextual interpretation, within Minimalism are to be intended as mediated by syntax as in Figure 1 (Giorgi & Dal Farra 2019, Marchetiello 2021).

Figure 1

The T-Model of Minimalism



As shown above, there is no direct link between sound and meaning, and whatever clause the speaker pronounces is actually realized in syntax which has to be intended as the same

³¹ Some parts presented in sections 3.1 and 3.2.1 have been written with the help of some notes taken in Professor Alessandra Giorgi's Advance Syntax class (2021) at Ca Foscari University of Venice.

³² The Generative model was again proposed by Chomsky (1957; 1965). This approach to language focuses on the acquisition and faculty of language as represented in the mind/brain (competence), rather than production (performance). According to Generative Grammar, children do not imitate what they hear, instead they possess an innate system which allows them to build a grammar of their own. The main evidence of the existence of this system relies on the fact that children, despite inputs and corrections, still generate structures of their own based on the considerations they make on their language. According to Chomsky, this innate faculty known as Universal Grammar is the "biologically innate organ [which] helps the learner make sense of the data and build an internal grammar (I-language), which then produces the sentences a speaker utters (E-language)." (van Gelderen, 2007, p.3). In this sense, Universal Grammar enables the creation of a set of rules, i.e. grammar, through the exposure of a given language. The set of acquired rules then allows the production on the speaker's part of sentences which he or she has never heard and that can be indefinitely long (van Gelderen, 2017).

for all the existing languages. Besides this, Chomsky argues that the kind of representation projected has to be the minimal possible which, at the same time, can provide the correct pairing (van Gelderen, 2007).

At this juncture it may be useful to shortly explain how sentences are derived within Minimalism. According to Chomsky, Universal Grammar contemplates a simple operation called Merge which combines two elements in a set. In order to derive a sentence, the speaker selects elements from the numeration, i.e. lexical entries presented in an unordered set, and merges them together from top to bottom first into constituents and finally into a sentence (see also Figure 2) (van Gelderen, 2007).

Figure 2

Merge operation

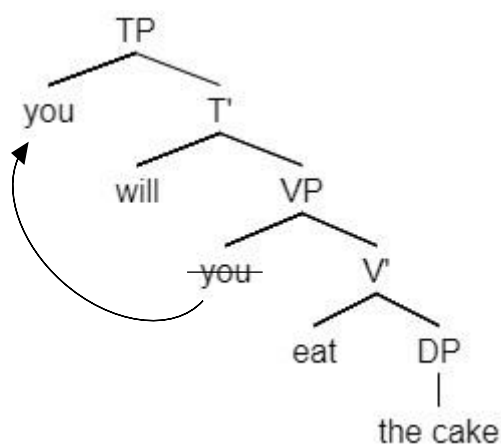
{you, will, eat, the, cake} → enumeration

- a. {the, cake}
- b. {eat, {the, cake}}
- c. {you, {eat, {the, cake}}}
- d. {will, {you, {eat, {the cake}}}}
- e. {you, {will, {you, {eat, {the, cake}}}}}

In regard to Merge operation, it is important to point out two main observations. The first one which has already been mentioned, is that Chomsky intended the sets in brackets as unordered sets – this issue about word order will be better discussed when describing Cartography in section 3.2.1. Second, as shown by Figure 2, Merge can actually combine different elements from within the derivation (see also Fig. 2, sentences d-e). Indeed, we tend to distinguish between External merge, which combines elements from outside the derivation, and Internal merge or Move which instead combines elements within the derivation. The last point worth mentioning is that Merge, both internal and external, is a recursive operation, i.e. hypothetically by continuously merging the speaker could produce endless sentences (van Gelderen, 2007).

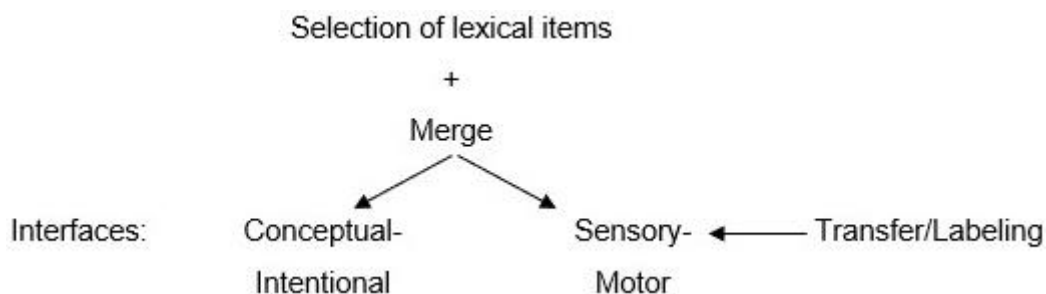
Another way of presenting the derivation is through the syntactic tree as presented in Figure 3³³. The building of a syntactic tree relies on the knowledge of X-bar theory which will be introduced in the next section.

³³ Copyright (C) 2011 by Miles Shang <mail@mshang.ca>

Figure 3*Syntactic tree*

As explained in the previous paragraph, merging proceeds top to bottom and each merge gives rise to a binary branch and a labeled node³⁴. For time reasons and because it is still an unsolved issue, this dissertation will not provide further explanations on the labeling of the nodes. In a broader maybe simplistic sense, we will assume that the lexical or functional category that the word belongs to is actually the same category which provides the label.

For a better understanding of the overall minimalist framework, Figure 4 visually summarizes the derivational system within Minimalism³⁵.

Figure 4*The Minimalist model of language generation*

³⁴ Van Gelderen points out that the “Problem of Projection (PoP) approach within Minimalism insists that the derivation [...] isn’t labeled when the derivation/tree is built.” (2007, p.10). The PoP argues that syntax combines objects in an unordered set without labels which are applied once syntax hands over the combined sets to the interfaces.

³⁵ This figure has been proposed by van Gelderen (2007).

Of course, the minimalist program could be explained more extensively, nonetheless the few information provided here are to be deemed as sufficient for the purposes of this dissertation. In fact with just this short description Minimalism has profound implications. As proposed by this theory, everything the speakers say, write, sign – and possibly gesture – has indeed a realization in syntax. More than this, Chomsky supports the idea that meaning is actually built in syntax. Within the issues raised by interjections, this implies that even these elements project a structure and in doing so they cannot but be considered as part of language.

3.2 Cartography

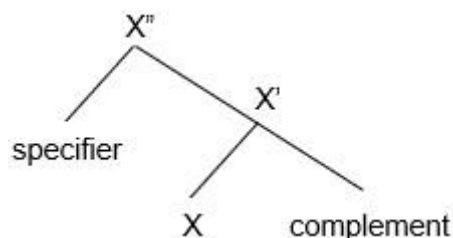
3.2.1 Towards Cartography

Before the immersion into the complex territory of Cartography, it might be useful to describe those basic principles which contributed to the development of this research program.

At the very basis of Cartography – and Minimalism as well – there is a configurational schema also known as X-bar theory which, as briefly introduced in section 3.1, provides the base for the syntactic representations (Chomsky 1970, Jackendoff 1974; 1977a; 1997b). In their bare form, syntactic trees in every language are built as in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Generative tree according to X-bar theory



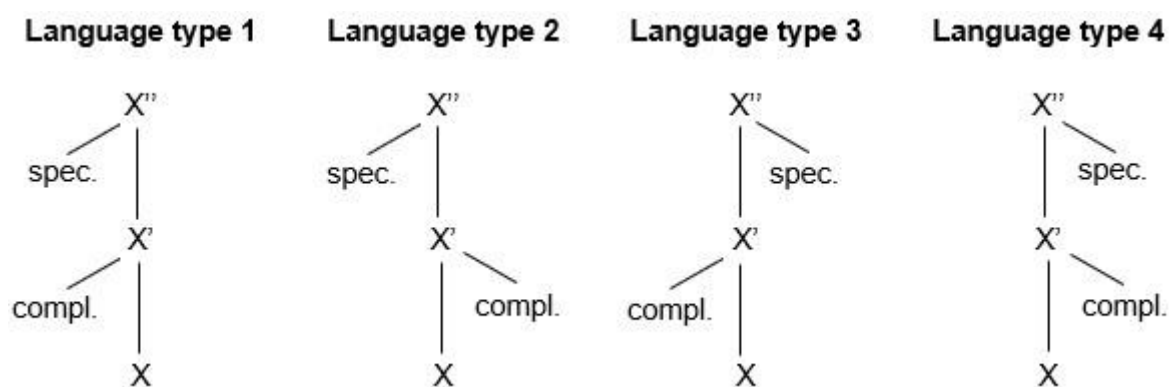
The head X can either be a lexical item or a functional category and whatever head projects a maximal projection called X'' (x double bar). The maximal projection includes a specifier and an intermediate projection X' (x bar). On its turn, the intermediate projection X' is constituted of a head X and a complement.

The main tenet of this basic scheme is that there is a one-to-one correspondence between the head and the maximal projection, i.e. each head projects a phrase and each phrase is projected by a head.

According to X-bar theory, word order is actually given by the parametrization of the branching direction of the syntactic tree, i.e. each language selects its branching direction for specifier and complement. This kind of parametrization led to the creation of four basic language types as in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Language types according to X-bar theory



X-bar theory predicted that each group should contain around 25% of the known languages. Nonetheless, further analysis demonstrated that predictions on the distribution of languages among those four types were incorrect in that there were no or very few languages with a right-branching specifier (see also Fig. 6, Language type 3-4).

Another disturbing factor which was not solved within this theory was the problem of hierarchy, linearization and how word order should be reached. Subsequent analysis conducted by Kayne on binary branching (1984)³⁶ and antisymmetry (1994)³⁷ “imposed significant constraints on structural representations.” (Shlonsky, 2010, p.418). As it often

³⁶ Specifically, the introduction of the binary branching hypothesis banned the idea of multiple complements or specifiers added to a node. By introducing this restriction to the X-bar schema, “a single specifier is available for each head and adjunction to X^{\max} is prohibited.” (Shlonsky & Bocci, 2019, p.12).

³⁷ C-command was first introduced by Reinhart (1976) and regarded constraints operations such as syntactic movement, binding and scope. The kind of c-command mentioned here is the one proposed by Kayne (1994). Starting from Reinhart’s considerations and a few observations on a series of asymmetries that were not supposed to be found in X-bar theory, Kayne postulated asymmetrical c-command: A c-commands B iff A does not dominate B and B does not dominate A, namely they are not one inside the other and the node immediately dominating A dominates B. (Kayne, 1994).

happens as a consequence of restrictions to the theoretical panorama, “constrained theories drive research forward by narrowing down the range of options open to analysis and hence sharpening and re-defining the research agenda” (Shlonsky, 2010, p.418).

3.2.2 Cartography

Regarding Cartographic syntax or Cartography, this research program was born around the nineties and it belongs as well in the Generative Grammar panorama, more precisely it is considered part of the Principles and Parameters theory³⁸ (Shlonsky, 2010). According to its founding fathers – the Italian linguists Luigi Rizzi and Guglielmo Cinque –, Cartography is neither to be considered an approach, nor a hypothesis: “the cartography of syntactic structures is [...] the attempt to draw maps as precise and detailed as possible of syntactic configurations.” (Cinque & Rizzi, 2008, p.43). In plain terms, the goal of this “research topic” (Cinque & Rizzi, 2008, p.43) is that of providing the most appropriate structural maps for natural language syntax³⁹.

Section 3.2.1 already mentioned some of the issues that contributed to reshaping the way syntactic structures were considered, namely Kayne’s Binary branching (1984) and Antisymmetry (1994). Perhaps, the reason behind the interest in meticulously mapping the syntactic structure is born more or less together with Minimalism, if not because of Minimalism.

The first spark that triggered the process happened in 1986 when Chomsky extended X-bar theory by introducing functional elements in the clause – the CP, IP and VP structures (Chomsky, 1986). The extension of the X-bar schema from lexical to functional categories, consequently paved the way for a series of analysis on the morphology of words and their relationship with the syntactic representation (Cinque & Rizzi 2008, Rizzi 2004b, Shlonsky 2010). In depth studies of the verbal structure (Larson, 1988) and the verbal inflections (Emonds 1978, Pollock 1989) gave rise to a phase of intense comparative cross-linguistic research and study of the clause, which culminated with Cinque’s (1999) monograph on the ordering of adverbial positions (Cinque & Rizzi 2008, Rizzi 2004b, Shlonsky & Bocci 2019).

³⁸ The theory of Principles and Parameters was largely formulated by Noam Chomsky and Howard Lasnik. Baker (2008) describes parameters as those variations which are responsible for the differences in the features of functional heads in the lexicon. In plain terms, Universal Grammar provides some parameters (e.g. pro-drop, headedness, *wh*-movement etc.) that will be set by the learner as he or she is acquiring a language. In this sense, as van Gelderen argues “the computational system is the same for every language, but the parametric choices are lexical and account for the variety of languages. They also determine linear order but have no effect on the semantic component.” (2007, p.7)

³⁹ Shlonsky & Bocci (2019) argues that by considering Cartography a research program rather than a theory the only question worth asking is whether this proposal is a correct one.

Of course, this new piece of information led to another question, i.e. how many and what functional heads and projections could actually constitute the structure of the clauses. According to Shlonsky (2010), given that Universal Grammar does not pose limits on the number of functional categories, the only possible way to determine how further scholars can extend those categories is only through empirical research. As Rizzi points out:

The view that inflectional morphology is distributed in the syntax, combined with a host of uniformity assumption (phrases are structured and ordered uniformly for lexical and functional heads across languages), paved the way to articulated conception of syntactic structures that is assumed and validated by cartographic studies. (Rizzi, 2004b)

Another trigger that justified cartographic research was the raising doubts on the possibility of optional movement, i.e. movement intended as the “ ‘last resort’ operation, applicable only when necessary to warrant well-formedness” (Rizzi, 2004b). Since Pollock’s 1989 work, many scholars have pointed out that interpretative movement is not really optional and actually postulated the addition of special heads acting as attractors.

Last but not least, it is fundamental to mention the proposal of a restrictive framework of phrase structure formulated by Cinque (1999) with his analysis of adverbs and functional categories. The scholar argued that despite their general optionality and distribution, adverbs were indeed “rigidly organized and serialized” (Shlonsky, 2010, p.421). Subsequent consideration and comparison across languages led to the conclusion that adverbs could not be simply adjunct to the existing structure. Besides these considerations, Cinque showed that there is a stable order of heads within the functional space of IP in all languages, banning the possibility of adjunction.

Again, as already said for Minimalism, Cartography could be described more in depth. For the purposes of this work, what it is important to know about this research is that with the introduction of the cartographic approach to syntax, the focus on the interpretation shifted from lexical categories to functional one. Beside this, sentences are not to be intended as linear structures, rather they represent richly articulated and hierarchical projections with specific meanings (Shlonsky & Bocci, 2019).

3.2.3 Cartography and Minimalism

Under the perspective briefly described above, Cartography could indeed be seen as a response to the limitations posed by a model which maybe was perceived as too narrow. (Cinque & Rizzi, 2008). In this sense, Cartography seems to clash with the main tenets

expressed by Minimalism. Besides the shared emphasis given to the interfaces, the two theories apparently seem to travel on opposite paths.

As explained in section 3.1, the very term Minimalism condensates the will of focusing on the most minimal simplicity possible as far as interfaces, computational operations and consequent representations are concerned; Cartography instead presents structures that are much richer in complexity. As Shlonsky (2010) explains, the traditional division of the clause into v/VP, TP and CP and their internal structures are indeed revisited within the cartographic research.

Another divergent point between the two approaches is the role played by formal features. In chomskyan/minimalist terms, features are to be found or not at the interfaces which are responsible for the triggering of syntactic movement. Differently, Cartography is not so concerned with the technical implementation of features, the interest rather relies in creating an organized hierarchical inventory of interpretable features (Shlonsky & Bocci, 2019).

In the end, are Minimalism and Cartography really at the antipodes? According to Cinque & Rizzi (2008) and Rizzi (2004b) this collision of ideals is just apparent. Minimalism is concerned with the generating devices, while Cartography is more interested in the details of the generated structures: two objectives that can be pursued in parallel. Besides this, Cinque & Rizzi (2008) point out that at the heart of Cartography there are indeed the general guidelines of the minimalist program since behind complex structures, one can still find the simple units, i.e. the head and the phrase it projects, which ideally define a single syntactically relevant feature (Marchetiello 2021, Rizzi 2004b, Shlonsky & Bocci 2019). According to Shlonsky (2010), “Cartography is not an alternative to Minimalism. On the contrary, the feature-driven approach to syntax, the reliance on simple operations such as Merge, Project and Search pave the way to research programs whose goal is to draw up a precise inventory of features and discover their structural relations.” (2010, p.427).

3.3 The Left Periphery of The Sentence

Sections 3.1-3.2.3 hopefully have contributed to help the understanding of the general panorama, i.e. the theoretical background that this dissertation will take for granted.

The following paragraphs will be dedicated to the introduction of the left periphery of the sentence, which has to be considered a sub-theory generated within the cartographic research and primarily concerned with the C-domain.

This specific analysis was indeed one of the first topics studied according to the principles of this approach (Rizzi & Bocci 2017) and was introduced by Rizzi in his work *The fine structure of the left periphery* (1997). Initially adopted to research this peculiar and rich clausal zone in Italian, the consequent map created for this language has then been used and continues to

be deployed for crosslinguistic analysis in other languages and dialects (Cinque & Rizzi 2008, Rizzi 2004b, Rizzi & Bocci 2017, Shlonsky 2010, Shlonsky & Bocci 2019).

As already mentioned in section 3.2.2, by hypothesizing a richer complexity within functional structures, whose sequence must be intended as the same for all languages, scholars were in a sense justified in pursuing research towards a more detailed and in-depth description of these elements (Rizzi & Bocci, 2017). In particular Rizzi (1997) observed that the complementizers *che* (that) and *di* (of) occupy different positions when found in presence of a Topic element like in examples (11) and (12).

(11) Penso che, il dipinto, lo appenderò su quella parete.

I think that, the painting, I will hang it on that wall.

(12) Penso, il dipinto, di appenderlo su quella parete.

I think, the painting, of hanging it on that wall.

According to this piece of evidence, Rizzi (1997) came to the conclusion that the C-domain was included between two heads, Force – responsible for the expression of the illocutionary force, or clause type of the sentence –, and Finiteness (Fin) which instead expresses the finite or non-finite character of the clause (Rizzi & Bocci, 2017).

The other element taken into account was Focus which in Romance languages is usually used left peripherally.

(13) Credo che, a tua madre, QUESTO MAGLIONE, a pranzo, le darò.

I believe that, to your mother, THIS JUMPER, at lunch, I will give it her.

As demonstrated in example (13), Focus can be followed and preceded by other Topics, though each sentence must count only one Focus. Regarding the order that these heads can show, Rizzi (1997) argues that all orders are possible as long as the clause presents only one Focus.

(14) a. Credo che, a tua madre, QUESTO MAGLIONE, a pranzo, le darò.

I believe that, to your mother, THIS JUMPER, at lunch, I will give it her.

Force > Topic > Focus > Topic > Fin

b. Credo che, a tua madre, a pranzo, QUESTO MAGLIONE, le darò.

I believe that, to your mother, at lunch, THIS JUMPER, I will give it her.

Force > Topic > Topic > Focus > Fin

- c. Credo che, QUESTO MAGLIONE, a tua madre, a pranzo, le darò.
I believe that, THIS JUMPER, to your mother, at lunch, I will give her.

Force > Focus > Topic > Topic > Fin

These observations contributed to the creation of the following map (Rizzi, 1997):

[Force [Top* [Foc [Top* [Fin [_{IP} ...]]]]]]

Further analysis and consequent development of this map came from studies of the interrogative complementizer *se* (if) and adverbs found in clause-initial position.

As pointed out by Rizzi (2001), in the left periphery of the sentence an independent position is available for a functional Interrogative projection, whose head hosts the complementizer *se* (if), or other *wh*-elements. The Interrogative projection both in embedded and main questions can be either followed or preceded by Topic and it can co-occur with a following Focus position.

- (15) Mi chiedo, a mia sorella, se, un maglione, glielo dovremo regalare.
I wonder, to my sister, if, a jumper, we should give her.

Force > Topic > Int > Topic > Fin

- (16) Mi chiedo se UN MAGLIONE le potremo regalare (non una gonna).
I wonder if A JUMPER we should give her (not a skirt).

Force > Int > Focus > Fin

Rizzi (2001) underlines that in order for the sentence to be grammatical Int must precede Focus as in example (17) and (18).

- (17) Perché UN MAGLIONE le volete regalare, e non una gonna?
Why A JUMPER do you want to give her, and not a skirt?

Force > Int > Focus > Fin

- (18) *UN MAGLIONE perché le volete regalare, e non una gonna?
* A JUMPER why do you want to give her, and not a skirt?

*Force > Focus > Int > Fin

A Topic instead can be inserted between a Int and Focus:

- (19) Perché, a tua sorella, UN MAGLIONE le volete regalare, e non una gonna?
Why, to your sister, A JUMPER, do you want to give her, and not a skirt?

Force > Int > Topic > Focus > Fin

After these considerations, the map for the left periphery appeared as follows:

[Force [Top* [Int [Top* [Foc [Top* [Fin [_{IP} ...]]]]]]]]]

Regarding adverbs, Rizzi & Bocci (2017) argue that they can be found in initial position when there is the need to emphasize this peculiar word. Despite displaying a similar intonational contour, initial-clause adverbs differ from Topic and contrastive Focus both interpretatively and with respect to movement.

(20) Sorprendentemente, tua madre mi ha invitato a cena.

Surprisingly, your mother invited me to dinner.

According to Rizzi (2004a) preposed adverbs have a dedicated projection Mod within the left periphery of the sentence. Inside this context they can be topicalized and focused but as far as their position is concerned, they are to be found in the lower part of the C-domain.

[Force [Top* [Int [Top* [Foc [Top* [Mod [Top* [Fin [_{IP} ...]]]]]]]]]]]

The last observation concerns contrastive focus and *wh*-element. At least in Italian main questions, these two heads seem to be incompatible regardless of the order. In embedded questions instead, the *wh*-element and the contrastive focus might co-occur if and only if Focus precedes the *wh*-element, though the result sounds degraded (Rizzi & Bocci, 2017).

(21) *A TUO NONNO che cosa hai portato, non ha tua nonna?

*TO YOUR GRANDFATHER what did you bring, not to your grandmother?

*Force > Focus > Int > Fin

(22) *Che cosa A TUO NONNO hai portato, non a tua nonna?

*What TO YOUR GRANDFATHER did you bring, not to your grandmother?

*Force > Int > Focus > Fin

(23) ??Mi chiedo A TUO NONNO che cosa tu abbia portato, non a tua nonna.

??I wonder TO YOUR GRANDFATHER what you brought, not to your grandmother.

??Force > Focus > Int > Fin

(24) *Mi chiedo che cosa A TUO NONNO tu abbia portato, non a tua nonna.

*I wonder what TO YOUR GRAND FATHER you brought, not to your grandmother.

*Force > Int > Focus > Fin

The distribution of functional projections shown in examples (21-24) led Rizzi (2004b) to postulate the presence of a special position called Q_{emb} for *wh*-element in embedded contexts like in example (25).

(25) ??Mi domando A TUO NONNO, ieri, cosa tu abbia portato, non a tua nonna.

??I wonder TO YOUR GRANDFATHER, yesterday, what you brought, not to your grandmother.

Force > Focus > Topic > Q_{emb} > Fin

In the end, the map created for the left periphery of the sentence looks as follows:

[Force [Top* [Int [Top* [Foc [Top* [Mod [Top* [Q_{emb} [Fin [IP ...]]]]]]]]]]]]]

The order just displayed above will provide the starting point for the considerations on interjections in the next chapter.

4. On the Syntactic Encoding of Italian Secondary Interjections

This fourth chapter will be devoted to the analysis of a few structures containing secondary interjections – *cavolo* and *davvero* –, to the eventual description of additional theoretical contour and some observations on their behavior in Venetian and Paduan dialects.

In addition to the pursuit of the primary goal, i.e. demonstrating that interjections do belong in language, the author of this dissertation considers important to conduct studies on specific interjections and related sentence structures. In agreement with Downing & Caro (2019), research studies on specific interjections are sparse, mostly concerned with the description of the semantic-pragmatic aspects. In this sense the academic community should concentrate its efforts and work in this direction to “fill the gaps”. Hopefully, through an increasing crosslinguistic analysis on different interjections and the adoption of multiple approaches, one day linguists might finally achieve a homogeneous, maybe unison definition for these elements.

Beside trying to anchor the explanations on consolidated academic works and grounds, this dissertation will rely also on empiric considerations. These contributions come

primarily from the observations of L1 and L2 Italian speakers and their attitudes or considerations on the structures presented above. About this specific issue, most of the observations come from speakers living in the Veneto region, more precisely in the suburban areas of the cities of Padua and Venice where the respective dialects are very lively and used together with Italian. The author considers as L2 speakers of Italian those anonymous contributors who learned this language while attending nursery and primary school, and whose L1 is represented by the Venetian or Paduan dialect. Although Italian is their L2, the speakers of this specific group are actually to be considered as bilingual as far as their mastering of the language is concerned. Finally, some of the contributions come from the author, being herself a native speaker of this language.

4.1 The Need for a Syntactic Analysis of Interjections

As mentioned in the introductory chapter and in the former section, the primary purpose of this study is that of demonstrating the belonging of interjections in language through the description of the different positions they occupy within the sentence. Indeed, together with a rising group of scholars and peers, the author believes that providing a syntactic explanation for interjections is fundamental – even though still on a hypothetical-experimental level at the present moment.

In sections 2.1 and 2.1.1 this dissertation briefly introduced how a semantic analysis and description of interjections led to a division among the scholars, and this was inevitable. If one had to describe nouns as that category which contains words concerned with personal names, place or things; and verbs as those words describing acts or events, then where would we insert a word such as *book*? Obviously, we would end up in the same kind of dilemma since, at least in English, the word *book* can be either a noun or a verb (van Gelderen, 2017). As van Gelderen affirms “semantic definitions are not completely adequate and we’ll need to define categories syntactically (according to what they combine to) and morphologically (according to how the words are formed).” (2017, p.14). Nonetheless, as demonstrated in chapter 2, even a morphological explanation of interjections is not available since these words do not show a precise generative rule for affixes or suffixes and can potentially belong to other lexical categories. For these reasons, the only possible way is the syntactic one.

As far as which part of the sentence structure will be tackled – that is the CP, IP or VP layer –, chapter 2 explained that interjections are profoundly related with the context and they must be syntactically encoded within the C-domain, i.e that part of the sentence that links the speakers to the context of utterance and possibly to the discourse. As Rizzi states:

We can think of the complementizer system as the interface between a propositional content (expressed by the IP) and the superordinate structure (a higher clause or, possibly, the articulation of discourse, if we consider a root clause). As such, we expect the C system to express at least two kinds of information, one facing the outside and the other facing the inside. (Rizzi, 1997, p.283)

For the reasons mentioned above, interjections are strongly connected with the CP layer. In particular, they activate and lexicalize specific functional heads in the left periphery of the sentence (Munaro 2019; 2022) as it will be shown later. So, as claimed at the end of chapter 3, throughout the upcoming analysis we will explore and discuss additional projections for the left periphery proposed by Rizzi & Bocci (2017):

[Force [Top* [Int [Top* [Foc [Top* [Mod [Top* [Q_{emb} [Fin [IP ...]]]]]]]]]]]]]

4.2 A Syntactic Classification of Interjections

The first step in this direction will be to provide a different perspective on the way these elements can be classified. In section 2.5 this work offered different kinds of classification of interjections primarily through the works of Ameka (1992) and Poggi (1981; 2009; 2022). The classifications the scholars proposed though are based almost exclusively on the semantic, pragmatic and morphological features, which are surely useful but not suitable for the purpose of this dissertation and the analysis in sections 4.3.1-4.3.3.

The classification suggested by Munaro (2019; 2022) instead maintains the traditional division between primary and secondary interjections as proposed by Ameka (1992) but, at the same time, it takes into consideration also the syntactical behavior with respect to the projected structure.

On primary interjections Munaro argues that they “lexicalize the highest functional head of the left periphery, to which interjections must raise in order to achieve the appropriate spatio-temporal anchoring.” (2022a, p.158), namely SpeakerP.

Secondary interjections instead can be split into three different categories “depending on whether they must, they can or they cannot be integrated with the associated clause; [...] the degree of integration depends on the merge position of the interjection which is in turn strictly connected to its discourse linking properties.” (Munaro, 2019, pp.185-186). According to the scholar, the first group of interjections must be integrated with the associated clause, and they have a strong relationship with the ongoing discourse. The second group is considered a hybrid one since it contains those interjections which can be optionally integrated with the

associated clause, i.e the integration is not mandatory. Munaro (2019) claims that the optionality of the integration is directly linked with their being optionally linked to a discourse antecedent. The last group includes interjections that cannot be integrated with the associated clause and in being so, they do not need an antecedent in the discourse.

4.3 *Cavolo* as an Interjection

Before going into the in-depth explanations of the structures, it might be useful to briefly illustrate *cavolo* as an interjection⁴⁰. According to Poggi's (1981; 2009; 2022) classification, *cavolo* can be considered as part of the informative interjection's group which, depending on the context of utterance, can convey ideas of surprise (26), confirmation (27)⁴¹, or displeasure (28). It can also be used optatively implying an imprecation as in example (29) (see also Tables 1-4).

(26) *Surprise*

Speaker A: Anna e Lucia adotteranno un cane la settimana prossima.

Anna and Lucia are adopting a dog next week.

Speaker B: Cavolo! Non me lo sarei mai aspettato!

Interjection! I've never expected that!

(27) *Confirmation*

Speaker A: Allora, verrai a casa nostra domani sera?

So, are you coming to our place tomorrow night?

Speaker B: Cavolo se ci sarò!

Interjection if I will be there!

(28) *Displeasure*

Speaker A: Ieri Gianni è caduto e si è rotto una gamba.

Yesterday Gianni fell and broke a leg.

Speaker B: Cavolo! Mi spiace!

Interjection! I'm sorry!

⁴⁰ As far as English is concerned, *cavolo* has not a direct translation in such language. Depending on the context it could be translated as *Christ!*, *jeez!*, *gosh!* or *what the hell?* when used as an imprecation. When it conveys surprise a possible parallel could be *oh my god!* or *wow!* (Goddard, 2014a).

⁴¹ As for this specific meaning, I would argue that *cavolo* is not the most appropriate interjection. In such situation, Italian speakers would preferably utter something like *sicuro!*, *certo!*, *certamente!*, *altroché!*, *eccome!* or *madonna!*.

(29) *Imprecation*

Speaker A accidentally breaks an expensive vase.

Speaker A: Cavolo! Ora sono nei guai!

Interjection! Now I'm in trouble!

Despite the fact that interjections tend to be almost exclusively used in informal situations (Poggi, 2022), *cavolo* represents a sort of exception. Especially in formal contexts, *cavolo* is used as the euphemistic form of the word *cazzo* (shit or fuck) as it is perceived by the speakers as a more polite form to express the mental and emotive states explained in examples (26-29). In simpler terms, on a semantic level both *cavolo* and *cazzo* convey the same ideas but the latter, being a swearword, it is mostly relegated to very informal or intimate contexts⁴².

As far as the kind of message it conveys – that is surprise, confirmation, displeasure or when it is used as an imprecation –, this can be retrieved by the context. Nonetheless it can be observed that in certain contexts the prosodic intonation the speaker uses when he or she utters the interjection actually can work in the same way, i.e. it helps the listener to distinguish the specific emotional state of the speaker.

By taking into consideration a few empirical observations on the use of this interjection among Italian speakers, this work suggests that *cavolo* is mostly used with an exclamatory intonation. The only exception to this intonational pattern happens sometimes when the word conveys displeasure:

(30) a. Speaker A: Mario purtroppo non potrà raggiungerci oggi.

Mario won't be able to reach us today.

Speaker B: Cavolo...

Interjection...

b. Speaker A: Mario purtroppo non potrà raggiungerci oggi.

Mario won't be able to reach us today.

Speaker B: Cavolo!

Interjection!

As shown in example (30), *cavolo* expressing displeasure can either be associated with a descending pitch as in (30a), or with an exclamatory intonation as in (30b). When pronounced with a falling intonation indeed, even if the listener is not given the context or

⁴² Hoepli.it. Cavolo. In *Hoepli.it La Grande Libreria Online*. Retrieved January 05, 2023, from https://www.grandidizionari.it/Dizionario_Italiano/parola/C/cavolo.aspx?query=cavolo

possesses no knowledge of the ongoing discourse, he or she can retrieve the unpleasant state perceived by the speaker by the kind of intonation used.

As for the general syntactic positioning of this interjection, *cavolo* can either appear as a single-word interjection (uttered in isolation), as an interjectional phrase (see also section 2.6.5) or it can be inserted in various sentences. As for the specific syntactic positions that are available for this item, the following sections will better develop this issue.

4.3.1 *Cavolo!*

This first part of the analysis will account for the behavior of *cavolo* when used as a single-word interjection. Despite the brief observation on the possible intonational pitch speakers can attribute to this interjection, the author will analyze this item as associated with the most common exclamatory pitch.

According to the syntactic classification proposed by Munaro (2019; 2022a) for the analysis of *caspita* and *accidenti*, the author states that *cavolo* belongs to the second group, i.e. it belongs to those interjections which show optionality as far as integration with the associated clause is concerned, possibly demonstrating prosodical and syntactic independence. In agreement with this kind of classification, the degree of association between the interjection and the rest of the sentence influences the interpretation of the clause as shown in examples (31) and (33).

(31) Speaker A: Allora? Luca ce l'ha fatta?

So? Did Luca make it?

Speaker B: Cavolo se ce l'ha fatta!

Interjection if he made it!

The analysis of the structure in example (31) is similar, if not identical, to the one proposed for interjections belonging to the first group⁴³. In this kind of construction, *cavolo* shows a certain degree of association in respect to the rest of the sentence as witnessed by the prosodical contour – here illustrated by the absence of punctuation between the interjection and the rest of the clause – and by the fact that *cavolo* is followed by the complementizer *se* (if).

In agreement with Munaro's (2019; 2022a) proposal, when found in this configuration, the interjection must appear at the beginning of the sentence, followed by *se* as observed above. On the issue of the positions available in such configuration, I argue that this element can

⁴³ For a better understanding of the discourse-linked interjections, see also Munaro (2019; 2022a)

only occupy the first position, since any other one just makes the sentence ungrammatical as in example (32a-d).

(32) a. *Se cavolo ce l'ha fatta!

b. *Se ce cavolo l'ha fatta!

c. *Se ce l'ha cavolo fatta!

d. *Se ce l'ha fatta cavolo!

Even if Poggi (2022) underlined the possibility for an interjection to disrupt the constituents (see also example (5) in section 2.8), here the semantics constrains the syntactic representation and the positions available for the element. Beside this, exactly like in the examples provided by Munaro (2019; 2022a) for Emilian and Venetian dialects and standard Italian, no additional element can appear between the interjection and the complementizer *se*, underlining the strong relationship intervening between the two items.

The structure presented in (31) then can only be uttered in response to a previous question posed by another speaker in order to provide a confirmation. As pointed out by Munaro (2019; 2022a), speaker B is already aware of the success of Luca and the reply he or she gives to Speaker A just represents an emphatic confirmation of the fact.

Going back to the structure of the left periphery illustrated in section 4.1, in such configuration the structure projected by sentence (31) might be the following:

[ForceP Cavolo [Force° se] [FinP ce l'ha fatta!]]

Given its strong relationship with the context, and the fact that it cannot occupy any other functional heads of those intervening between Force and Finiteness, the only projection available for the interjection is the left-most one, that is Force. Beside this, the exclamatory reading of the sentence is in agreement with Rizzi (1997) who claims that this projection actually encodes those features determining the sentence type (Colasanti & Silvestri, 2019). Another piece of evidence for the generation of *cavolo* in such a high position comes from the fact that the exclamatory reading of an item is encoded higher than other heads (such as Topic or Focus) and is hosted in the Force projection⁴⁴.

As far as the complementizer *se* is concerned, the strong relationship intervening between *cavolo* and *se* attracts this latter element to a higher position in the sentence, i.e to the head of Force projection.

⁴⁴ This specific observation comes from comparison of structures containing topicalized, focus and exclamatory elements done during the class of Dialettologia Italiana held by Professor Nicola Munaro (2018) at Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

The structure illustrated above though is just a proposal. For such a configuration Munaro (2019; 2022a) hypothesizes the activation of another functional head just above Force projection – that is the Evaluative Speaker projection – in which the speakers realize their “evaluation of the relevant propositional content in reply to an utterance of the addressee.” (Munaro, 2019, p.189). Based on the evidence from standard Italian *eccome* and *altroché* (Munaro 2019; 2022a), sentence (31) could possibly project the following structure:

[EvalSP [EvalS° Cavolo] [ForceP [Force° se] [FinP ce l'ha fatta!]]]

Cavolo would be merged in the head of the Evaluative projection because of the personal take on the situation on the part of the speaker. Given the strong bond between the complementizer and the interjection, the former will be hosted in a higher head, that is Force⁴⁵.

It is important to point out that the presence of functional heads beyond Force is no novelty and should not be intended as in contrast with the structure of the left periphery shown in section 4.1. For space reasons this dissertation will not enter the details of this other issue, but as demonstrated by Colasanti & Silvestri (2019), Cruschina & Remberger (2018), Haegeman (2014), Haegeman & Hill (2013), Hill (2007) and Heim et. al (2016), very much in the spirit of Cartography there is crosslinguistic evidence witnessing the expansion of the CP layer even beyond the Force projection. According to Hill (2007), these functional heads preceding Force work as an interface between the clause and the discourse, i.e. they sort out the discourse setting for the utterance.

As Hinterhölzl & Munaro (2015) notice, the Evaluative projection would be activated in all those occurrences – exclamations and special questions – in which the speaker makes an evaluation both on his or her expectations or on the ongoing situation.

Let us now take into consideration *cavolo* when it is not directly connected to the sentence by means of a linguistic antecedent. In these contexts, it can either appear at the beginning of the sentence (33a), or in final position (33b):

- (33) a. Cavolo! Ce l'ha fatta!
 Interjection! You did it!
- b. Ce l'ha fatta! Cavolo!
 You did it! Interjection!

⁴⁵ Notice here that the interjection occupies the head position and not the specifier one. Given the fact that they do not belong to a defined category, nor they are syntagms, this is plausibly the only position they can appear in.

As underlined by the exclamation mark, sentences in (33a-b) show a difference as far as prosody is concerned. The two parts in fact could be analyzed separately. As for the meaning, in these specific sentences the speaker's reaction denotes a state of surprise, symbolizing that he or she has no previous knowledge of the situation, i.e. he or she did not know anything about the subject's succeeding. They could also mean that this situation actually did not encounter the speaker's previous expectations.

Given these two observations, the underlying syntax must project a different structure than the one proposed for sentence (31).

When the interjection is fronted as in example (33a), Munaro (2019; 2022a) suggests that the speakers analyze the interjection "as the head of a contiguous SpeechAct projection" (2022, p.165) as follows:

[SpeechActP [SA° Cavolo!] [EvalSP [ForceP [FinP Ce l'ha fatta!]]]]

By comparing the projections for sentences (31) and (33a), Munaro (2022a) points out that the interjection is first merged in the head of the Evaluative projection and then moves to the head of the Speech Act projection. The movement to this latter position is underlined by the different prosodic contour, i.e. the intonational break, and by the freedom of utterance, since sentences like (33a-b) do not need any discourse background in order to be produced.

On the structure projected by sentence (33b), namely when the interjection is found in final position, the order is derived through "the rising of the nuclear clause FinP to the specifier of SpeechActP." (Munaro, 2022a p.166).

[SpeechActP [FinP Ce l'ha fatta!]; [SA° Cavolo!] [ForceP x_i]]

Briefly going back to sentence (33a), it can be observed that sometimes the speakers can stress this emotional state by pronouncing an additional primary interjection preceding *cavolo* like in example (34).

(34) Oh cavolo! Ce l'ha fatta!

This kind of configuration allows us to introduce another projection preceding the SpeechAct one. In agreement with Munaro (2019; 2022a) and Giorgi (2012), I propose that here the primary interjection *oh* activates the Speaker projection, i.e. that projection hosting the speaker's temporal and spatial coordinates. As in example (33a), *cavolo* would raise to the head of SpeechAct licensing the pause within the sentences.

[SpeakerP [Speaker° Oh [SpeechActP [SA° cavolo!] [EvalSP [ForceP [FinP Ce l'ha fatta!]]]]]

Finally, as stated in section 4.3 example (29), *cavolo* can also be uttered in isolation. Again, the interjection here would raise by head-to-head movement from Force° to Speaker° in order to check the temporal and spatial coordinates of the speaker, relating the uttering of the sentence to the situation.

[SpeakerP [Speaker° Cavolo!] [SpeechActP [ForceP [FinP]]]]

Further details on different configurations will be better described in the following section.

4.3.2 *Ma che cavolo!*

Ma che cavolo! (what the hell! or what the hell?) represents an interjectional phrase which, like idiomatic expressions, can be decomposed in multiple lexical entries⁴⁶. Very much in agreement with Poggi's (1981) hypothesis, this can be seen as an example of the diachronic process outlined in footnote 27 (see also section 2.6.2) involving the transformation of the sentence due to the deployment of holophrastic language⁴⁷. In this kind of situation, the meaning of such phrase is retrievable only by taking into consideration the whole. Indeed, by considering each lexeme separately, the listener is not able to understand the underlying message.

The author observes that such phrase is mostly used with its optative-ejaculative meaning, i.e. as an imprecation uttered by a speaker who is very upset by the situation. This interjectional phrase can be roughly paraphrased as "I am really annoyed by what you did" or "I am really annoyed by the situation". More precisely, *ma che cavolo!* can be described as a sudden outburst towards a situation that is unexpected, or at least whose outcome is not the expected one. Such interjectional phrase can be uttered out of the blue, triggered both by some kind of antecedent in the discourse, or by some contextually-given factor.

As for the structure, it can be observed that the initial adversative *ma* (but) is actually optional. Some speakers in fact tend to produce this structure omitting this item as in (35):

(35) (Ma) che cavolo!

⁴⁶ As pointed out in section 2.6.5, interjectional phrases differ from idiomatic expression since the former are speech acts and the latter are predications.

⁴⁷ According to Macaluso (2012), at the beginning of this process, *cavolo* might be used with its first lexical meaning of *cabbage*. In a second time, the interjectional meanings of *cavolo* might be derived by the very nature of the vegetable considered a poor one, or at least one of the few ingredient peasants could afford. That is where that sense of low consideration may come from. Besides the considerations on the culinary aspect, the author affirms that Ancients believed that dreaming a cabbage implied bad luck or sadness. Reporting the words of Professor Francesco Lo Piparo, Macaluso (2012) says that *cavolo* might be derived from the ancient Greek *kaulos*, meaning stalk, or trunk. This could explain the relationship with the male genitals and the swearword *cazzo*.

Regarding the status of *che* (what), this is not a complementizer but a *wh*-element. Indeed, such clause is considered a *wh*-exclamative (Benincà 2022, Sorianello 2010). In agreement with these scholars, this particular kind of exclamative can be uttered in absence of the verb, or, in particular elliptical contexts, even without the *wh*-operator⁴⁸. As explained in Sorianello's (2010) work, *che cavolo!* displays those traits typical of this kind of sentence, namely factivity, scalar implicature and the inability to function in question/answer pairs. Finally, the *wh*-element must always appear in initial position (Benincà, 2022), even though it will be shown that there are exceptions to this rule and some elements can precede it. Indeed, *cavolo* used as an imprecation can be found also in different phrases, preceded by the adversative *ma* (36) or by a primary interjection as (37) and (38):

(36) *Ma (che) cavolo!*

(37) *Eh (che) cavolo!*

(38) *Oh (che) cavolo!*

Notice here that the *wh*-element *che* displays optionality as well (Benincà 2022, Sorianello 2010). However, the presence of the *wh*-modifier is not fundamental to achieve the grammaticality of the clause. Nonetheless, the absence of such element in a clause containing an interjection might cause a slight change in the meaning. We will go back to this discussion later in this section.

Regarding the possible position available for the different items, being this both a form of fixed expression and a *wh*-exclamative, the elements cannot move freely or cannot appear in any other configuration. For this reason, the interjection can only be preceded by *che* and any other order would produce the ungrammaticality of the clause. In addition to this, as in the examples shown in section 4.3.1, no other element can be inserted between *cavolo* and *che*, or between the *wh*-element and the adversative, highlighting in such configuration the strong relationship linking the items.

As for the syntactic structure of *ma che cavolo!*, following Giorgi's (2018) proposal for special counter-expectational and surprise-disapproval questions in Italian, I argue that, similarly to these kinds of questions, the adversative *ma* must appear in a higher position, surely higher than *che* and the interjection itself, as it precedes them linearly. In counter-expectational and surprise-disapproval questions, Giorgi (2018) states that *ma* is actually a discourse head, a special head connecting the parts of the discourse. *Ma* would be base

⁴⁸ Even though this work stated that interjections are different from elliptical sentences, here the optionality might be triggered by the deployment of holophrastic language, which is typical of elliptical sentences too.

generated in the head position of this projection, taking the rest of the clause as its complement.

In analogy to the proposal shown in section 4.3.1, it can be hypothesized that speakers uttering such phrase will first analyze *che cavolo* in a configuration similar to the one proposed for sentence (34)⁴⁹:

[SpeakerP Che [Speaker° cavolo!] [SpeechActP [EvalP [ForceP [FinP]]]]]

As in the former example, the elements would raise via movement from ForceP to SpeakerP. In this *wh*-exclamative though, the specifier position of SpeakerP would be occupied by the *wh*-element *che*, while *cavolo* would be hosted in the head of the same projection. Eventually this sentence would merge as the complement of the higher Discourse projection, whose head hosts the adversative *ma*.

[DiscourseP [Discourse° Ma] [SpeakerP che [Speaker° cavolo!] [SpeechActP EvalP [ForceP [FinP]]]]]

Again, it can be hypothesized that this double analysis first as a sentence and then as a discourse will actually account for the optionality of the adversative *ma*.

On the hypothesis that *ma* is hosted by the Discourse projection, this work supports the analysis conducted by Giorgi (2018) given that such element cannot appear on the right of any of the functional heads present in the left periphery – with the only exception of vocatives as in (40) –, nor it can appear in embedded contexts.

(40) Luca, ma che cavolo!

As for structure (36), the author suggests an analogous analysis:

[DiscourseP [Discourse° Ma] [SpeakerP [Speaker° cavolo!] [SpeechActP [ForceP [FinP]]]]]

Given the absence of the *wh*-element *che*, the specifier position of SpeakerP would remain empty, while the interjection would move from Force° to the head of SpeakerP. Again, the optionality of the initial *ma* would be due to the double analysis described above.

Taking into consideration sentences (37) and (38), both are introduced by another non-lexical interjection – namely *eh* and *oh*. As far as these two primary interjections are

⁴⁹ Such landing positions would eventually allow the speaker to add another piece of sentence as in (39):

(39) (Ma) che cavolo! Ora me ne vado!

concerned, it can be observed that the kind pronunciation shown is different from the *eh* and *oh* used to express surprise.

Eh used in isolation conveys indignation from the speaker's part towards something that the interlocutor did or said, or towards the situation in general (Poggi, 2022). Nonetheless, it can be arguably said that such interjection might be paraphrased as "I am really annoyed by what you did or said", or "I am really annoyed by the situation". When *eh* is found in association with *cavolo*, the former interjection seems to intensify the sense of disappointment, disapproval or annoyance conveyed by the latter.

Similarly, the presence of *oh* at the beginning of the sentence functions as well as a sort of emotional reinforcement, though it appears to underline more a sense of surprise rather than annoyance.

In analogy with the discussion raised by Colasanti & Silvestri (2019) for optative clauses in upper and extreme Southern Italian dialects, the initial primary interjection and *che* form one prosodic unit, namely there is no pause intervening between the elements. Besides, no additional material can appear between them. According to these scholars, *che* just seems to reinforce the pragmatic and semantic value of *cavolo* as stated above. Nonetheless, differently from the structures taken into consideration by Colasanti & Silvestri (2019), this work has proved that standard Italian shows optionality as for the realization of *che*. However, as Colasanti & Silvestri (2019) and Munaro (2002a) highlight, in such optative contexts primary interjections must appear in initial position.

Following these observations, as a possible structure projected by sentences (37) and (38), I propose again the following one:

[SpeakerP [Speaker° Eh/Oh [SpeechActP [SA° cavolo!] [EvalSP [ForceP [FinP]]]]]

According to Munaro's analysis of primary interjections in relation with the work of Colasanti & Silvestri (2019), primary interjections could actually raise to the head of the Speaker projection "to achieve the deictic reference to the event of the external world that is the source of the speaker's mental state." (2002a, p.174). The secondary interjection *cavolo* would reach the head of SpeechAct given the absence of additional lexical material blocking its rising. When the *wh*-operator *che* is uttered, this would be hosted in the specifier of SpeechAct.

4.3.3 Observations on the Relationship Between the Venetian and Paduan dialects and *Cavolo*

As stated at the beginning of the chapter, some of the contributions for this work come from speakers actively using Venetian and Paduan dialects (from now on also Venetian-Paduan) together with Italian. Even if the focus is not on these dialects, it can be interesting to actually observe the interactions between these languages and the interjection just analyzed.

I mentioned many times that interjections pertain mostly to informal situations. I also mentioned that, as for Italian, *cavolo* can be used also in formal situations as the substitute of the swearword *cazzo* (shit or fuck). As for the geographical area taken into consideration, the dialect is relegated to highly informal contexts. Venetian or Paduan are mostly deployed in very intimate social situations, namely between friends or family members. Given the high level of informality characterizing both interjections and the use of dialect, the word *cavolo* is not widely attested in these dialects. The uttering of something like (41) is acceptable but still considered very unusual.

(41) *Cavoeo!*

To the best of my knowledge, *cavoeo* is not associated with a holophrastic reading, rather it conveys the meaning the word has in the articulated language, that is ‘cabbage’. If some speaker happens to pronounce something like (41) with a supposed holophrastic meaning it is mostly a case of contamination coming from Italian. Probably the speaker uttering “*cavoeo!*” has an imperfect knowledge or mastering of the dialect.

For these reasons, the most common word for the Italian *cavolo* is actually the swearword *cazzo*, rendered as “*casso*” in Venetian-Paduan dialect.

Casso could be intended as the direct translation or perfect substitute for the Italian interjectional *cavolo*. As for the contextual deployment of this word, this is the same stated for *cavolo*, namely it can convey confirmation (43), surprise (44), displeasure (45) or an optative use (46).

(43) Speaker A: *Seto che Laura a xe sta licenciada?*

Did you know that Laura got fired?

Speaker B: *Casso!*

Shit!

(44) Speaker A: *Eora, viento casa mia doman?*

So, are you coming to my place tomorrow?

Speaker B: *Casso se vegno!*

Fuck if I come!

(45) Speaker A: Ea xe cascà e ea xe ga spacà 'na gamba.

She fell and she broke a leg.

Speaker B: Oh casso...

Oh shit...

(46) Casso! Vien qua!

Shit! Come here!

As shown in the previous examples, *casso* belong to the second group of interjections as well, given the possibility of being uttered both in isolation or linked to the sentence by means of a complementizer. As in the case of *cavolo* no additional material can be inserted between the interjection and *se* (if). In this sense, the structures projected by sentences (43) and (44) are identical to the ones proposed for *cavolo* uttered in isolation or linked to the sentence.

[SpeakerP [Speaker° Casso!] [SpeechActP [ForceP [FinP]]]]

[EvalP [Eval° Casso] [ForceP [Force° se] [FinP vegno!]]]]

No difference is observed for the behavior with respect to the position it can occupy, namely it can either follow or precede the sentence.

(47) a. Casso! A ghea ga fata!

Fuck! He did it!

b. A ghea ga fata! Casso!

He did it! Fuck!

Again, in accordance with Munaro's (2019; 2022) proposal, *casso* would raise to the head of SpeechActP licensing in this way the prosodic pause. Instead, when the interjection is found in final position, this is due to the merging of the sentence in the specifier position of the SpeechAct projection.

[SpeechActP [SA° Casso!] [EvalSP [ForceP [FinP A ghea ga fata!]]]]

[SpeechActP [FinP A ghea ga fata!]_j [SA° Casso!] [ForceP x_i]]

Notice here that, like in the case of Italian *cavolo*, sentences (45) and (46) could either denote surprise or represent an emphatic confirmation. That is, the speaker did not expect

the success of the event, or the speaker is already aware of the outcome of the situation and just emphasizes his or her confirming the fact.

As for the possible configurations *casso* can appear in, speakers can pronounce it together with optional additional elements, namely the primary interjection *oh*, the adversative *ma* (but) and the *wh*-element *che* (what).

(48) Oh casso! A ghea ga fatta!

Oh shit! He did it!

(49) Che casso!

What the fuck!

(50) Oh che casso!

Oh what the fuck!

(51) Ma che casso!

But what the fuck!

In sentence (48), as in the case of *oh cavolo* and *oh che cavolo*, the primary interjection actually stresses that sense of surprise conveyed by the secondary interjection. Differently from standard Italian though, there seems to be a preference for the uttering of the primary interjection *oh*, rather than *eh*.

Sentences (49), (50) and (51) are of course imprecations uttered by an upset speaker towards a situation whose outcome was both totally unexpected or did not encounter the previous expectations⁵⁰.

Again, as for the structures, there is no difference with the explanations and proposals hypothesized in the previous sections:

[SpeakerP [Speaker° Oh [SpeechActP [SA° casso!] [EvalSP [ForceP [FinP A ghea ga fata!]]]]]

[SpeakerP Che [Speaker° casso!] [SpeecActP [EvalP [ForceP [FinP]]]]]]

[SpeakerP [Speaker° Oh [SpeechActP che [SA° casso!] [EvalSP [ForceP [FinP]]]]]]]

[DiscourseP [Discourse° Ma] [SpeakerP che [Speaker° casso!] [SpeechActP EvalP [ForceP [FinP]]]]]]]]

⁵⁰ A brief mention has to be done here in the case of imprecation. As for Italian *cavolo* represents the polite form used instead of the swearword *cazzo*, in Venetian-Paduan “*casso*” is considered a mild imprecation a polite form of cursing. Most of the times speakers of these dialects tends to use other interjections which involves offences of various type towards religious figures.

4.4 *Davvero* as an Interjection

Going back to Italian secondary interjections, another interesting example is represented by *davvero* (really or truly). Like *cavolo*, *davvero* is a word that comes from the articulated lexicon and whose pragmatic import can be paraphrased as “is that what you mean?”, or “I can confirm to you that it is so”. Nonetheless, when it is not used with its holophrastic meaning, *davvero* is listed under the adverbial category (Ricca & Visconti, 2014). Of course, a more in-depth discussion on the differences between the usages will be developed in the following paragraphs.

Looking at Tables 1 and 2, Poggi (1981; 2009; 2022) considers this item either as an informative or an interrogative interjection, primarily used to stress or ask for confirmation.

(52) Speaker A: Hai saputo? Mauro è andato via senza pagare.

Did you know it? Mauro left without paying.

Speaker B: Davvero?

Really?

(53) Speaker A: Sei sicuro Mauro sia andato via senza pagare?

Are you sure Mauro left without paying?

Speaker B: Davvero!

Really!

As seen in the examples, such interjection is pronounced in isolation in response to a previous event (52) or as a comment (53). Speaker B in example (52) is actually surprised, maybe even astonished by the information he or she has just apprehended and is asking for confirmation. Differently, example (53) does not show signs of surprise, rather the speaker just confirmed the supposition or the disbelief of the interlocutor. In this specific situation though, it is also possible that speaker A just possesses an imperfect knowledge of the situation and that in order to confirm or rectify this knowledge, he or she asks speaker B to provide confirmation or not of the fact.

In the previous paragraphs it has been mentioned that *davvero* is also deployed with its adverbial value. This works supports the idea that in order to “activate” the correct interjectional interpretation, *davvero* must be uttered in isolation. In order to demonstrate the difference, there will be proposed a few examples regarding the various positions *davvero* can occupy within the sentence.

As an adverb, *davvero* can appear in initial position, on the left of the subject (54), between the subject and the modal-finite verb (55), between the modal-finite and the infinitive (56), or at the end of the sentence in final position (57).

(54) Davvero io devo andare.

Really I must leave.

(55) Io davvero devo andare.

I really must leave.

(56) Io devo davvero andare.

I must really leave.

(57) Io devo andare davvero.

I must leave really.

It can appear almost in every position even in embedded contexts as in (58a-f):

(58) a. Davvero io credo che tu debba venire.

Really I think you should come.

b. Io davvero credo che tu debba venire.

I really think you should come.

c. Io credo davvero che tu debba venire.

I think really you should come.

d. Io credo che tu davvero debba venire.

I think you really should come.

e. Io credo che tu debba davvero venire.

I think you should really come.

f. Io credo che tu debba venire davvero.

I think you should come really.

Finally, *davvero* can be placed before an adjective. In such configuration it is considered a degree adverb modifying the adjective (Ricca & Visconti, 2014).

(59) Laura è davvero carina.

Laura is really pretty.

Of course, as it stands out from examples (54-59), the placement of the item allows for different readings of the sentence or the adjective. However, due to the very nature of adverbs as modifiers of verbs or adjectives (van Gelderen, 2017), none of these placements

can lead back to the holophrastic reading of *davvero* suggested at the beginning, namely confirmation.

Notice then that in none of these examples *davvero* is prosodically divided by the following or preceding element. Such pause instead is only present when *davvero* is used interjectionally. By observing this behavior, it can be hypothesized that *davvero* can work as an interjection only when uttered as a single word.

4.4.1 *Davvero* as an Interrogative Interjection

For the time being, this dissertation will first account for *davvero* intended as an interrogative interjection and will discuss later its informative use.

According to the classification proposed by Munaro (2019; 2022), this element pertains to the third group, namely to those interjections that cannot be integrated with the associated clause.

(60) a. *Davvero?* Laura ha lasciato Marco?

Really? Laura left Marco?

b. Laura ha lasciato Marco? *Davvero?*

Laura left Marco? Really?

Indeed, the insertion of a complementizer, either *se* (if) or *che* (that), or any other element between the interjection and the sentence would result in the ungrammaticality of the clause. As for the positioning, *davvero* can be uttered in initial (60a) or final position (60b).

Let us now take a look at the possible structures projected by *davvero*. In agreement with Munaro (2019; 2022a), the prosodic pause intervening between the interjection and the impossibility of inserting an element connecting the interjection with the rest of the sentence allow us to hypothesize that *davvero* must be generated at least in the SpeechAct projection. In the case of interrogative *davvero* though, speakers actually utter such interjection with an interrogative prosody. In this specific case it might be hypothesized that before landing in SpeechAct°, *davvero* could have checked its interrogative feature in a lower projection, maybe in IntForce°.

[SpeechActP [SA° *Davvero?*] [EvalP [ForceP [FinP Laura ha lasciato Marco?]]]]

As for sentence (60b), in analogy to the discussion about *cavolo*, when the interjection is found in final position this is due to the movement of the sentence to the specifier position of the same projection:

[SpeechActP [FinP Laura ha lasciato Marco?]_j [SA° Davvero?] [EvalP [ForceP ,]]]

Similarly to *cavolo*, this interjection can be preceded by other elements, namely the adversative *ma* (but) (61), or another primary interjection (62a-c).

(61) Ma davvero?

But really?

(62) a. Oh, davvero?

Oh, really?

b. Dai, davvero?

Come on, really?

c. No, davvero?

No, really?

Speakers sometimes can also utter something like (63):

(63) Oh, ma davvero?

Oh, but really?

The presence of other elements preceding *davvero* seems here to stress that sense of surprise conveyed by the final interjection. Notice also then that the presence of additional items preceding the interjection could possibly allow for an ironical reading of the sentence. The discriminatory element which distinguishes between a normal interrogative and an ironical reading is of course prosody. For space reasons and because this work has not access to specific instruments apt to measure such difference, we will not consider the ironic reading of such sentence.

As for the structures, here we will repropose some of the structural analyses put forth for *cavolo*.

For a sentences like (61), we already said that the adversative *ma* is hosted in the head of DiscourseP connecting the parts of the discourse. DiscourseP then would take the rest of the sentence as its complement. Even if interjections pertaining to the third group are supposedly generated in SpeechAct (Munaro 2019), here *davvero* could hypothetically be attracted to the higher projection SpeakerP, given the relationship co-occurring between the interjection and *ma*.

[DiscourseP [Discourse° Ma] [SpeakerP [Speaker° davvero?] [SpeechActP [ForceP [FinP]]]]]

Sentences like (62a-c) shows the same structure proposed for the cases of secondary interjections preceded by primary ones:

[SpeakerP [Speaker° Oh/dai/no [SpeechActP [SA° *davvero?*] [EvalSP [ForceP [FinP]]]]]

The primary interjection would be hosted in the head of SpeakerP to anchor the spatio-temporal coordinates of the speaker, while *davvero* would be hosted in the adjacent head of SpeechActP.

As for example (63), it can be hypothesized that such sentence actually represents a series of interlinked discourses. Given the optionality of both the primary interjection and the adversative *ma*, assuming Giorgi's (2018) theory for Discourse projections, we can imagine that first the speaker would analyze the sentence as in (61):

[DiscourseP [Discourse° Ma] [SpeakerP [Speaker° *davvero?*] [SpeechActP [ForceP [FinP]]]]]

This sentence would eventually merge as the complement of another DiscourseP placed higher. On the position occupied by the primary interjection, it can be argued that this would be hosted in the head of this higher DiscourseP.

[DiscourseP [Discourse° Oh] [DiscourseP [Discourse° ma] [SpeakerP [Speaker° *davvero?*]
[SpeechActP [ForceP [FinP]]]]]]

According to Giorgi's (2018) analysis of adversative *ma* described in section 4.3.2, this primary interjection cannot be preceded by any other element, hence it would arguably occupy the head of DiscourseP. It might be hypothesized also that before landing in Discourse°, the primary interjection *oh* could have checked the spatio-temporal coordinates in SpeakerP.

4.4.2 *Davvero* as an Informative Interjection

The behavior of *davvero* used as an informative interjection is slightly different than the one of its interrogative counterpart. According to Poggi (1981; 2009; 2022) this interjection is used to give confirmation about something, namely it asserts something like "I confirm that it is so". But giving confirmation of something does not imply that the speaker is actually experiencing an emotion of some sort. Again, given the absence of data and instruments apt to calculate the micro-variations in the tone, it cannot be said whether the speakers pronounce such interjection with a flat intonation or other kind of pitches. It might be uttered with a flat intonation as in (64a) or it can be stressed using an exclamative intonation as in (64b).

(64) a. Speaker A: Ci sei stato sul serio al concerto?
Did you actually go to the concert?

Speaker B: Davvero.

Really.

b. Speaker A: Ci sei stato sul serio al concerto?
Did you actually go to the concert?

Speaker B: Davvero!

Really!

Since we lack specific technical tools for prosodic analysis, we will not take into consideration the intonational pitch.

Going back to *davvero*, notice that as an informative interjection it is uttered in response to a previous question posed by the interlocutor. In such configuration, Speaker B just confirms a former belief or partial knowledge possessed of Speaker A. Interestingly it can be found as a response to a previous interrogative *davvero* (see also example (65)):

(65) Speaker A: La settimana scorsa Laura è stata licenziata.

Last week Laura got fired.

Speaker B: Davvero?

Really?

Speaker A: Davvero.

Really.

As for the positioning, informative *davvero* can only be found in isolation, pronounced as a single word. Differently from the interrogative counterpart, configurations such (66a-b) are considered opaque, namely it cannot be properly said whether *davvero* behaves like an adverb or as an interjection.

(66) a. Davvero, ci sono stato.

Really, I have been (there).

b. Ci sono stato, davvero.

I have been (there), really.

The prosodic pause intervening between the interjection and the rest of the sentence could act like the discriminatory element to consider *davvero* as an interjection and not as an adverb. Nonetheless, at least in my opinion, such difference is not so sharp in the case of

informative *davvero*. For these reasons, I will consider *davvero* as an informative interjection only in when uttered in isolation as in example (65).

As for sentence (65) I will hypothesize that it would be generated in SpeechAct like the interjections belonging to the third group. However, given the fact that it is uttered in isolation, this would allow its raising to the head of SpeakerP to check the speaker's coordinates.

[SpeakerP [Speaker° Davvero] [SpeechActP [ForceP [FinP]]]]

Like its interrogative counterpart, informative *davvero* can be found in other configurations like:

(67) Speaker A: Davvero? Sei stato al concerto?

Really? Have you been at the concert?

Speaker B: Davvero davvero.

Really really.

Sentence (67) though is peculiar. Speaker A seems to be quite surprised by the event of speaker B going to the concert as attested by the utterance of the initial interrogative *davvero*. Instead, the uttering of the second *davvero* in the answer seems to work as a reinforcement. In such configuration no other element can be inserted between the two interjections, underlying the strong relationship intervening between the elements. Notice then that there is no pause intervening between the items.

As for the structure, it might be hypothesized that the first *davvero* could act like a primary interjection occupying the head of SpeakerP, while the second one would remain lower in SpeechAct°.

[SpeakerP [Speaker° Davvero] [SpeechActP [SA° davvero] [ForceP [FinP]]]]

4.4.3 Observations on the Relationship Between the Venetian and Paduan dialects and *Davvero*

In this final section I will briefly try to account for the behavior of interjectional *davvero* and its counterpart in Venetian and Paduan dialects.

By observing the linguistic behavior of native speakers, *davvero* (in these dialects rendered as *davero*) is present in the lexicon both as informative (68) and as interrogative (69) interjection.

(68) Speaker A: Sul serio el xe 'nda via senza pagare?

Did he really leave without paying?

Speaker B: Davero.

Really

(69) Speaker A: El xe scampa senza pagare.

He run away without paying.

Speaker B: Davero?

Really?

However, at least on the basis of the judgment of some anonymous contributors, the uttering of *davero* or *davero?* is acceptable, though it does not represent the first choice of native speakers.

In the case of confirmation, speakers would preferably pronounce something like *ostia!* in the Paduan dialect, or *ostrega!*, *ostreggheta!* in Venetian. Beside these interjections, the use of *ciò!* is attested in both varieties.

(71) Speaker A: Sul serio el xe 'nda via senza pagare?

Did he really leave without paying?

Speaker B: Ciò!

Interjection!

These interjections belong to the third group as well, namely they appear in isolation and cannot be associated to the sentence by any kind of linguistic means. Nonetheless, in these dialects these interjections must be pronounced obligatorily in initial position. According to native speakers, a structure like (72) appears ungrammatical:

(72) Speaker A: Sul serio el xe 'nda via senza pagare?

Did he really leave without paying?

Speaker B: *El xe scampa senza dire niente a nissuni. Ostia!

*He run away without telling anything to no one. Interjection!

As for the structure projected by *cio!*, *ostia!* or *ostrega!*, it can be hypothesized that these interjections would be generated in Force° given their exclamatory pitch. From this position then, they would move to SpeechAct°, possibly reaching Speaker°.

[SpeakerP [Speaker° Ostia!] [SpeechActP [ForceP [FinP El xe scampa senza dire niente a nissuni]]]]

As for the interrogative *davvero*, when speakers need to ask for confirmation, they usually utter sentences like (73) and (74):

(72) *Xe vero?*

Is it true?

(73) *Sito sicuro?*

Are you sure?

5. Conclusions

The aim of this work has been that of proving that interjections belong to language through the identification of the possible positions they can occupy within the sentence. Though still very tentatively, a syntactic description of the behavior of these elements seemed a helpful contribution to the ongoing debate which involves theoretical linguists. As for the general literature on interjections, most of the studies conducted from the sixties to the present day seem more focused on providing semantic-pragmatic descriptions of interjections, rather than on trying to expand such interest towards other sectors of linguistics. Such semantic-pragmatic explanations represent for sure a precious contribution to the issue, nonetheless the very nature of these kinds of descriptions leads inevitably to a schism among the scholars.

On the other hand, the literature concerned with the syntax of interjections is sparse and still highly hypothetical due to the lack of in-depth studies on this issue. In addition to this flaw, works on specific interjections are even more rare. With this dissertation I hope I have contributed to increasing the number of studies more focused on the syntactic behavior of interjections. Maybe redundantly, the hope also concerns the future development of crosslinguistic research on specific interjections in this sense. By approaching interjections from different perspectives and in different languages, maybe one day the academic community might come together with a homogeneous description and concept for these items.

As for this dissertation, the focus of this work has been the description of the Italian secondary interjections *cavolo* and *davvero*. These interjections have been analyzed first as a single word and then within different structures.

Regardless of the type of sentence it appears in, *cavolo* tends to be associated with an exclamatory intonation. *Davvero* instead does not seem to be associated with a specific pitch. Unlike those occurrences in which it is used as an interrogative interjection, its informative counterpart can be uttered either with an exclamatory or flat intonation.

According to the author, interjections – both primary and secondary – lexicalize the higher part of the CP layer, namely the extreme left periphery. More specifically, they lexicalize at least ForceP, which in Rizzi (1997) and Rizzi & Bocci (2017) represents the highest projection as far as the left periphery is concerned. Such statement is supported by the fact that exclamations would be naturally hosted in this projection.

As for the debate presented in section 2.2 concerning the juxtaposition of exclamations and interjections, this work supports the view that such type of sentence is the most suitable and natural one. In agreement with Soriano, “because of its expressive load, this phrasal type falls within among the manifestations of emotional speech.” (2010, p.86)⁵¹. As interjections are involved with emotions and mental state of the speakers, their being uttered with this specific intonation or their appearance in these kinds of structures just represents their most natural environment. Notice that the two issues should not be intended as overlapping. Besides, when conveying a sense of displeasure, *cavolo* can either be uttered with the common exclamatory pitch or with a different descending one.

However, an exception to this generalization is represented by the interrogative *davvero*. For this specific interjection it can be hypothesized that before moving towards higher projections, it would actually check its interrogative feature in IntForce°.

Subsequent works concerning the expansion of the left periphery then helped in broadening Rizzi’s theory by adding a series of functional heads more and more involved with the codification of contextual information. According to the hypothesis formulated in this research, interjections would raise to the heads of these higher projections to check specific features concerned both with the speaker and his or her epistemic knowledge, and the context itself.

In addition to this, it has been observed that primary and secondary interjections can appear within the same sentence. When found in this configuration, primary interjections must appear higher than secondary interjections, though hosted in the head of two different projections. Normally, no additional element can appear on the left of the primary interjection, with the only exception of the adversative *ma* (but) hosted in the head of DiscourseP.

The appearance of interjections so high in sentence structure might be one of the reasons that make them so opaque as for their categorization. Given their deictic nature involving both the internal states of the speaker and the context, the only part of sentence structure able to attract such elements is the left-most one. Notice that while pronouncing interjections, speakers always utter them with specific prosodic and intonational patterns. Such prosodic features are supposed to be encoded very high in the sentence.

⁵¹ English translation from Italian mine.

Finally, given that the empirical contributions come also from speakers of the Venetian and Paduan dialect, I deemed as interesting to offer an analysis of the two interjections in these dialects. As for the structures, Venetian and Paduan seems to confirm the fact that interjections are generated high in the syntactic tree. Differences though arise in the choice of specific interjections.

In the case of *cavolo*, Venetian-Paduan speakers prefer the uttering of the swearword *casso*, that is *cazzo* (shit or fuck). Given the high level of informality of both interjections and the colloquial use of the dialect, this behavior is expected.

Davvero is attested in these dialects, although it does not represent the preferred choice. Speakers tend to pronounce other interjections in the case of informative “*davvero*”, namely *ostia!* in Paduan and *ostrega!*, *ostregheta!* in Venetian. *Ciò!* seems to be present in both dialects. As for interrogative *davvero*, speakers produce *davvero?* though again, they seem to prefer the uttering an entire sentence in order to ask confirmation rather than using a single interjection.

To conclude, as already stated at the beginning, works on this kind of issues are still very spare and experimental. The proposals made here might be confirmed or completely disconfirmed in the future. In the case of interjections, sweeping the dust under the rug just caused an unjustifiable lack of knowledge which cannot be compensated by continuous discussions on their status. To quote Einstein: “we can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”.

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Table 1*Informative interjections*

Type			Specific Meaning	Example
Beliefs			Understanding	<i>Ah</i>
			Acknowledgement	<i>Già, toh!</i>
			Confirmation	<i>Anzi!, altroché!, appunto, cacchio, caspita, cavolo, cazzo, davvero, diamine, eh, mhm, öh, okay, ostia!, proprio, sì, Sic! (just in written texts), sicuro, vero</i>
			Negation	<i>Affatto, macché, see..., ñc</i>
			Ignorance	<i>Bah, boh, chissà, mah</i>
			Incredulity	<i>Che!, che cosa!, cosa!, maddai!, no!</i>
			Doubt or Hesitation	<i>Allora, beh, cioè, così, dico, dunque..., èeh, ehm, mhm, mah</i>
			Surprise	<i>Ah, accidenti, boia, ih, oh, öh, olla, toh, uh, caspita, caspiterina, cribbio, diamine, ullallà, mamma (mia), la madonna, misericordia, no, perbacco, però!, ragazzi!, cacchio, sorbole, capperi, cavolo, la vacca, merda, cazzo...</i>
Goal	Thwarted goals	Physical disease	Pain	<i>Ahi, ahia, ahio, uhi</i>
			Cold	<i>Brr</i>
			Disgust	<i>Bleah, puah, bèeh</i>
			Fatigue	<i>Aùff, uffa, uff</i>
		Psychic suffering	Boredom or annoyance	<i>Uffa, uff, uh</i>
			Resignation	<i>Pazienza, eeh</i>
			Contempt	<i>Puah, pfui, poh</i>
			Displeasure or desperation	<i>Ahimè, ohimè, ahinoi, no!,</i>

				<i>peccato</i>
			Worry	<i>Ñc, no, peccato</i>
			Shudder	<i>Aaah!, Noo!</i>
			Indignation	<i>Èeh, ohibò, ooh</i>
			Disappointment	<i>Acciderba, acciderbolina, accipicchia, alé, beh?, caspiterina, cribbio, diamine, la Madonna, vacca</i>
Achieved goals	Generic		Satisfaction	<i>Aah, òh, òoh, ecco, meno male</i>
			Exultance	<i>Evviva, hurrà, iuhù, alleluia, osanna</i>
	Specific		<i>Aah, eureka, ha, iùm, maramèò, tiè, uée!, vivaddio, ecco, là, piacere, mi rallegra,</i>	

Table 2*Interrogative interjections*

Type	Examples
Request for confirmation	<i>Eh?, nevvero?, davvero?, no?, vero?</i>
Request to tell or repeat	<i>Eh?, beh?, che?, come?, cosa?</i>
Request for explanation	<i>Beh?, quindi?, allora?</i>

Table 3*Requestive interjections*

Type	Specific meaning	Examples	
Generic requests	Attention request	<i>Aho, ehi, ehilà, ohé, ohilà, èst, uehi, uehilà</i>	
	Pure incitations	<i>Alé, avanti, coraggio, dài, prego, su</i>	
	Marked as to performative	Pray	<i>Dèh</i>
		Encourage	<i>Orsù, suvvia, coraggio</i>
		Forbid	<i>No</i>
	Marked as to aspect	Start	<i>Marsch!, sotto!, via!</i>
		Go on	<i>Avanti</i>
		Do again	<i>Bis</i>
	Miscellaneous	<i>Altolà, arri, pardòn, scc..., sciò, ss..., tè tè, aiuto, allegria, avanti, calma, cuccia, largo, perdono, permesso, prego, pietà, pista, pronto, scusa, silenzio, soccorso, sveglia, vergogna, via, va là</i>	

Table 4*Optative interjections*

Type		Examples
Ejaculations	Invocations	Gesù, Madonna, mamma, Maria, misericordia
	Imprecations	Cribbio, perbacco, perbaccolina, perdiana, boia, cacchio, cavolo, Cristo, dannazione, diavolo, Dio, perdio, maledizione, merda, ostia
Formulas	Greetings	Arrivederci, addio, buonanotte, buonasera, buongiorno, ciao
	Wishing formulas	Auguri, in bocca al lupo, cento di questi anni
	Politeness formulas	Complimenti, congratulazioni, condoglianze, grazie, rallegramenti, salute, salve