

The discourse marker *talè* ‘look’ in Sicilian and the development of mirativity

Silvio Cruschina

Department of Languages, University of Helsinki, Finland <silvio.cruschina@helsinki.fi>

This study examines the morphosyntactic properties and the pragmatic functions of *talè* in Sicilian. Its morphological invariability and its restricted syntactic distribution are taken as evidence for its status as discourse marker. Despite its uncertain origins, this marker is clearly related to the verb *taliari* ‘look’ and it shows a functional behaviour similar to the verb-based discourse markers equivalent to English *look* in other Romance languages, sharing in particular the function as attention-getter (cf. Italian *guarda*, Spanish *mira*). Unlike its Romance counterparts, however, *talè* has additionally developed a mirative value, which may complement its function as attention-getter or serve as its sole expressive and subjective meaning. This prominent and frequent mirative function, which only appears in limited or constrained contexts in other Romance languages, suggests a higher degree of grammaticalization and functional specialization for *talè*, and reflects more advanced stages in the evolution of pragmatic functions that characterize Romance verb-based discourse markers.

KEYWORDS: discourse marker, attention-getter, mirativity, grammaticalization, Sicilian.

1. Introduction

A significant body of literature on Romance languages recognizes that discourse markers derived from the perception verb equivalent to English ‘look’ primarily serve as ‘attention-getters’, that is, to call for or keep the hearer’s attention.¹ Italian *guarda*, for example, can be used as an attention-getter to capture the hearer’s focus either on the process (1) or on the content of the utterance (2) (see Ghezzi & Molinelli 2014):

(1) *Guarda, se le chiedi scusa, tutto si sistema.*
 look if to.her ask.2SG pardon everything REFL fix.3SG
 ‘Look, if you apologize, everything will be all right.’
 (Ghezzi & Molinelli 2014: 119)

(2) *Guarda che non è mica difficile!*
 look that NEG be.3SG NEG difficult
 ‘Look, this is not difficult!’
 (Ghezzi & Molinelli 2014: 119)

This primary function is considered to have developed directly from the literal meaning of the imperative form, shifting the deictic invitation to direct the sight towards something to a request to direct the attention towards an utterance and its content (see Waltereit 2002, Ghezzi & Molinelli 2014: 129, among others; cf. also §5). The same studies have additionally analysed the fine-grained pragmatic, interactive, procedural functions and communicative effects that these markers have progressively acquired to express intersubjective values and the speaker's attitude toward their interlocutor (see, among others, Bazzanella 2001, Waltereit 2002, Fagard 2010, Ghezzi 2012, Ghezzi & Molinelli 2014, 2015 on Italian *guarda*; see also Pons Bordería 1998, Portolés 1998, Tanghe & Jansegers 2014, Sánchez López 2017, Fuentes-Rodríguez 2020, González López & Trotzke 2021, Villalba 2024 on Spanish *mira*).

More recently, Sánchez López (2017) and Badan (2020) have shown that mirative values can be associated with these markers to convey the speaker's surprise and unexpectedness, although only limitedly to specific structures:

- (3) a. *¡Mira que eres linda!*
 look that be.2SG pretty
 'You are so cute!' / 'How cute you are!'
- b. *¡Mira que haber dejado tu empleo!*
 look that have.INF left your job
 'It's unbelievable that you left your job!'
 (Sánchez López 2017: 490)
- (4) *Guarda te è andato al ristorante senza dirmelo!*
 look you.SG is gone to.the restaurant withoutsay.INF.to.me.it
 'Surprisingly, he's gone to the restaurant without saying a word to me!'
 (Badan 2020: 306)

In (3a) Spanish *mira* is used in an exclamative sentence expressing a degree property; whereas in (3b) we find the same marker in a peculiar syntactic context where an infinitive is introduced by the complementizer *que* 'that' (Sánchez López 2017). *Guarda te*, in the example in (4), from the regional variety of Italian spoken in Veneto, includes the accusative second person singular pronoun *te* 'you', but it is analysed as a single discourse marker (Badan 2020). We may argue that in these structures, the mirative function is the result of a further degree of grammaticalization of the expressive values that these markers can convey, emphasizing the speaker's evaluation and marking a greater departure from their imperative origin. As mentioned, however, this function is restricted to specific syntactic contexts (see also Villalba 2024).

The role of discourse or alterity focalizer has also been included within the pragmatic functions performed by both Italian *guarda* and Spanish *mira*, especially when they occur in internal position (see Ghezzi & Molinelli 2014: 133-134, Martín Zorraquino & Portolés Lázaro 1999: 4171-4190), but it is especially González López & Trotzke (2021) who identify and discuss in detail an information-structural function of *mira*, according to which this marker acts as a 'watershed' element that partitions topical (to the left) and focal information (to the right), in connection with the illocutionary force of the sentence:

- (5) CONTEXT: Laura is explaining to David how to analyse a sentence based on a concrete example. She therefore asks David:
- a. Laura: *¿Has entendido el ejemplo?*
'Do you understand the example?'
- b. David: *El ejemplo, mira, no hay quien lo entienda.*
'The example, look, nobody can understand it.'
(González López & Trotzke 2021: 19)

In this paper, we investigate the Sicilian marker *talè*, which, despite its uncertain etymology (cf. §2), show parallels with these perception verb-based markers. Even if the morphological and syntactic properties of *talè* include some significant differences with respect to its counterparts in other Romance languages (cf. §3), its functions are similar and comparable. Indeed, this marker can serve both as attention-getter, as in examples (6) and (7), and as mirative marker (8). However, unlike with its equivalent in the other Romance languages, the mirative function of *talè* is very prominent and is not restricted to any syntactic contexts (cf. §4). It can either supplement its role as an attention-getter or stand alone as an expressive and subjective marker (7).²

- (6) *Talè, vidi sta bella funtana? Ddocu ogni matina vennu dudici palummi a biviri.*
'Look, do you see this nice fountain? Every morning twelve doves go there to drink.'
(Pitrè 1: 675)
- (7) *Talè, figliu, cci li vò' jiri a purtari du' pira?*
'Look, (my) son, would you go and bring some pears to them?'
(Pitrè 3: 305)
- (8) *Talè! Talè! 'U commissariu arrivò!*
'Look! Look! The inspector arrived!'
(Camilleri, *Riccardino*, 2020, p. 9)

We take the greater availability of the mirative function as indicating that *talè* has reached a more advanced stage of grammaticalization than its Romance counterparts, an evolution that can be seen as a natural cog-

nitive and functional development from its original deictic and attention-getting function (cf. §5). In the discussion of the pragmatic functions of *talè*, we will also address the question of whether in any of its pragmatic uses, this marker operates at the level of information structure. A comparison with Spanish *mira* will show that *talè* has not developed the watershed function identified in González López & Trotzke (2021) (cf. §4). An information-structural role can only be inferred as an implicit aspect of its use as a mirative marker, highlighting relevant new information – a role that can potentially be seen as a basic common denominator underlying both the attention-getting and the mirative functions.

2. What is *talè*? Hypotheses on its origins

Both in dictionaries and in etymological studies, *talè* is defined as an exclamative marker or interjection that is closely related to the verb *taliari* ‘look’ (cf., e.g., Piccitto & Tropea 1977-2002, Varvaro 2014, Ruffino & Sottile 2015, Sottile 2016). However, the exact origins and development of *talè* remain a matter of debate. Two opposing hypotheses exist: i. *talè* originates as an imperative form derived from the verb *taliari*, as illustrated in (9), and ii. *talè* is an exclamative marker or interjection directly borrowed from Arabic, see (10):

(9) i. verb *taliari* > imperative form > exclamative marker/interjection *talè*

(10) ii. exclamative marker/interjection *talè* > verb *taliari*

According to the first hypothesis, *talè* originated as a contracted imperative form of the verb *taliari*. Support for this analysis comes from its functional alignment with the imperative use of perception verbs in other languages. Indeed, Sicilian *talè* can often be translated directly with Italian *guarda* ‘look’ and English *look*. This functional correspondence has supported the argument for its derivation from the verb *taliari*. Amari (1854) and Pitrè ([1875] 1995), for example, include *talè* among the interjections derived from verbs, citing parallels with *talà*, a less common but related form. Such variants suggest that contraction or phonological simplification could have contributed to the evolution of *talè*. Additionally, the existence of *talè* as a common verbal imperative may have facilitated its grammaticalization as a discourse marker, eventually separating it from its strict verbal origins to acquire broader pragmatic functions, as seen in other Romance languages (cf. §§4-5).

An alternative hypothesis suggests that *talè* emerged independently as an exclamative marker directly borrowed from Arabic. Varvaro (2014), in particular, underscores the plausibility of this hypothesis,

proposing that it derives from the Arabic imperative *ṭalle'h* ('look'), which might have been adopted into Sicilian during the period of Arab influence in the region. He further proposes that the Sicilian verb *taliari* developed later, by backformation, from this borrowing (see also Ruffino & Sottile 2015: 38-39, Sottile 2016: 104). This argument is supported by morphological considerations. The regular second-person singular imperative of *taliari* in Sicilian is *talia*, not *talè*, leaving the final vowel *-e* in *talè* unexplained within the framework of a purely Romance derivation. By contrast, direct borrowing from Arabic provides a straightforward explanation for the marker's morphology and phonology.

Interestingly, we do not find occurrence of *talè* in historical documents, likely due to its predominant use and specialization in the spoken language. At the same time, however, it is also true that very few attestations of *taliari* appear in old Sicilian, with records only beginning in the 15th century. See the infinitive form *taliari* in (11) and the present indicative third-person plural *talianu* in (12):

- (11) *Hai statu a taliari zà et illà cum mala fantasia? Haiti festigiatu, oi parlatu palori mali?*
'Have you been looking here and there with ill intentions? Have you celebrated, or spoken bad words?'
(ARTESIA: *Confessionale III*, beginning of XV century)
- (12) *ca quandu quilli granduli si talianu <et> parinu [si mictirisi] supta la gula a lu cavallu...*
'that when those grown-ups look at each other and it seems [as if they want to place themselves] under the throat of the horse...'
(ARTESIA: *Trattato di mascalcia 2*, XV century)

The exact origins of Sicilian *talè* remain a fascinating subject of linguistic inquiry, reflecting the complexities of the Arabic influences on the Sicilian lexicon. Irrespective of whether it represents a contracted imperative of *taliari* or an independent borrowing from Arabic, its development shows a mix of both verbal and non-verbal properties, as typical of verb-based discourse markers in Romance languages. Although some of its features set it apart from its Romance cognates, as we will see in the following sections, the parallelisms are many.

In the absence of compelling diachronic evidence supporting either hypothesis, we will therefore rely on the synchronic discourse and functional properties of *talè* in contemporary Sicilian, which will be reviewed in the next sections, to adopt hypothesis i. (cf. (9)): *talè* derives from the imperative form of the verb *taliari*, with the unexpected final vowel resulting from phonological contraction or reduction and presumably triggered during the process of grammaticalization. This reduced form accounts for several morphosyntactic differences compared to genuine imperatives, particularly with respect to inflection and cliticiza-

tion (cf. §3); however, it does not rule out an imperative origin, which is supported by both in the verbal morphosyntactic properties (cf. §§3-4) and in its functional development (cf. §§4-5).

3. Morphological and syntactic properties

From a morphological perspective, *talè* displays properties that distinguish it from genuine imperatives. Unlike true imperatives, it is invariable: it does not take agreement inflections and is temporally undetermined with respect to the event. Its invariability becomes more striking when *talè* is compared with Italian *guarda*, which becomes *guardate* in the plural (13b)³ and *guardi* as a singular polite form (14) – which is morphologically subjunctive – and with the regular Sicilian imperative *talia*, which also has a plural (cf. *taliati* [look.IMP.2PL] in (15)) and a singular polite form (cf. *taliassi*, [*vos*]sa *talìa* in (16) and (17)).

- (13) a. *Guarda, non puoi sbagliare.*
 look.2SG not can.2SGmistake.INF
 b. *Guardate, non potete sbagliare.*
 look.2PL not can.2PLmistake.INF
 ‘Look, you can’t go wrong’
 (adapted from Bazzanella 2001: 236)

- (14) *Guardi, la signora non è in casa.*
 look.PRS.SBJV.3SG the lady not is at home
 ‘Look, Madam is not at home.’
 (Bazzanella 2001: 236)

- (15) *Taliati! Ddà ca l’ierva jera luonga, li vistiuola eranu magri; e ccà ca l’ierva mancu si vidi, li vistiuola su’ accussi gruossi.*
 ‘Look! Over there, where the grass was long, the animals were thin; and here, where the grass is barely visible, the animals are so big.’
 (Pitrè 3: 6)

- (16) *Taliassi com’ è sciacquatu!*
 look.PST.SBJV.3SG how is attractive
 ‘Look how good-looking he is!’
 (Pirandello, *Liolà*, p. 168)

- (17) a. *Vossa talìa: chissa chi veni èsti mè matri cu li me’ soru.*
 you.POL look.IMP.2SG this.onewho comes is my mother with the my sisters
 ‘Look: the one coming is my mother with my sisters.’
 b. *Mamà, mamà! Vossa talía chi bella giuvina chi passa!*
 mother mother you.POL look.IMP.2SG what beautiful young.one who pass.3SG
 ‘Mother, mother! Look at that beautiful young woman passing by!’
 (Pitrè 4: 239)

Furthermore, *talè* cannot host clitic pronouns (cf. Italian *guarda-lo* [look.IMP.2SG-him/it], Sicilian *talìa-lu* [look.IMP.2SG-him/it], ‘look at him/it’) and cannot be followed by a subject (cf. Italian *guarda te* [look.IMP.2SG you.ACC], Sicilian *talìa tu* [look.IMP.2SG you.NOM] ‘look at that’), a characteristic that could in principle reinforce its classification as something other than a verb. Clitics and postverbal subjects are only possible with the regular imperative *talìa*, as shown in (18) and (19), respectively:⁴

- (18) *Va taliali bonu ca cci nn’ hannu*
 go.IMP.2SG look.IMP.2SG.them good that there of.them have.3PL
ad essiri chi t’ hannu a piaciri.
 to be.INF those to.you have.3PL to please.INF
 ‘Look carefully, because there must be some that you will like.’
 (Pitrè 4: 242)

- (19) *Talìa, talìa tu, ora...*
 ‘Look, you look, now...’
 (Pirandello, *Pensaci, Giacuminu!* p. 86)

Syntactically, *talè* exhibits a restricted distribution. It predominantly appears in sentence-initial position, either preceding the main clause or a vocative phrase, as shown in (6) and (7) above, respectively, which are repeated here below for convenience. In these contexts, it can be reduplicated, as illustrated in (8) and (20), but it cannot be coordinated (e.g. with other discourse markers) or modified (e.g. by negation), confirming its status as discourse marker (see Cardinaletti 2015, Remberger 2021):

- (6*) *Talè, vidi sta bella funtana? ddocu ogni matina vennu dudici palummi a biviri.*
 ‘Look, do you see this nice fountain? Every morning twelve doves go there to drink.’
 (Pitrè 1: 675)
- (7*) *Talè, figliu, cci li vò’ jiri a purtari du’ pira?*
 ‘Look, (my) son, would you go and bring some pears to them?’
 (Pitrè 3: 305)
- (8*) *Talè! Talè! ’U commissariu arrivò!*
 ‘Look! Look! The inspector arrived!’
 (Camilleri, *Riccardino*, 2020, p. 9)
- (20) *Talè, talè, talè! E cu sì l’avissi ’mmaginatù mai!*
 ‘Look, look, look! And who would have ever imagined it!’
 (Anzalone, *Pipispezzi*, 1981/1995, p. 28)

Despite these non-verbal characteristics, *talè* also displays features that are typical of verbs, suggesting some level of grammatical integra-

tion with the host clause. First of all, it can enter a structure that is typically used to express a polite imperative and that does not require a special inflection. Indeed, in Sicilian the polite form of the singular imperative can be realized not only with the 3SG of the past subjunctive (16) but also with the normal imperative preceded by the polite and formal pronoun *vossia* or a reduced form of this pronoun (17) (see Cruschina 2014 for more details on the latter grammatical device). Because it is invariable, *talè* does not inflect based on politeness or formality. However, some native speakers (from Mussomeli) accept its imperative use following the formal pronoun, as *sa talè* in (21):⁵

- (21) a. *Sa talè, u telecomandu jè ddrà.*
 you.POL look the remote.control is there
 ‘Look, the remote control is there.’
 b. *Sa talè chi mi purtaru!*
 you.POL look what to.me bring.PST.3PL
 ‘Look what they brought me!’
 c. *Sa talè cu c’è!*
 you.POL look who there.is
 ‘Look who’s there!’

In this structure, *talè* can function either as a genuine polite imperative when it occurs independently (21a) or as a discourse marker expressing attention-getting and surprise when it is integrated into a larger clause (21b,c). However, *sa talè* cannot be used on its own to convey mirativity, indicating that the mirative function as an autonomous discourse marker requires a greater degree of separation from its verbal origins.

Syntactically, *talè* can introduce a direct object (22a), which can be preceded by the differential object marker (DOM) *a*, as in (22b). Moreover, it can introduce various types of clauses, including free relatives (23a), indirect interrogatives (23b), exclamatives (23c), and declaratives introduced by the complementizer *ca* (24a,b):^{6,7}

- (22) a. *Talè bella giuvina!*
 look beautiful young.woman
 ‘Look at the beautiful young woman!’
 (Pitrè 1: 663)
 b. *Talè a ma cuscinu! Bella machina ca javi!*
 look DOM my cousin beautiful car that has
 ‘Look at my cousin! What a nice car he has!’
- (23) a. *Talè ch’ ha’ a fari: stasira tu t’ammucci ’nta lu jardinu...*
 look what have.2SG to do.INF tonight you REFL.hide.2SG in the garden
 ‘Look at what you have to do: tonight you will hide in the garden...’
 (Pitrè 1: 373)

The discourse marker talè ‘look’ in Sicilian and the development of mirativity

- b. *Talè unn’ eritu misu!*
 look where were.2SG.you put
 ‘Look where you were!’
 (Pitrè 2: 150)
- c. *Talè ch’ è graziusa!*
 look that is nice
 ‘Look how nice she is!’
 (Anzalone, *Pipispezzi*, 1981/1995, p. 2)

- (24) a. *Talè ca sparti s’arrabbia!*
 ‘Look (that) he is even getting angry!’
 (Anzalone, *Mprestami a to’ mughieri*, 1982/1996, p.12)
- b. *Talè ca vinniru uora, talè!*
 ‘Look (that) they just arrived!’
 (Pitrè 1913: 224)

The presence of DOM with *talè*, as in (22b), is particularly interesting and deserves further exploration, as it can shed light on the mixed properties of this discourse marker. We do not yet have sufficient data to draw firm conclusions about the exact extent of this phenomenon, but we can begin with the important observation that the conditions licensing or permitting DOM with *talè* are similar to the general distribution of DOM in Sicilian (see Guardiano 2023). DOM tends to occur after *talè* when the object is animate (typically human or highly animate), definite or specific, or a proper noun or pronoun. In this context, however, DOM appears to be more optional than it is with other verbs, as indicated by the use of parentheses in the examples in (25):

- (25) a. *Talè (a) Giovanni chi bella machina ca s’ accattau!*
 look DOM Giovanni what nice car that REFL bought.3SG
 ‘Look at Giovanni, what a nice car he bought!’ / ‘Look, what a nice car Giovanni bought.’
- b. *Talè (a) ddu piccùattu cùamu si visti!*
 look DOM that boy how REFL dressed.3SG
 ‘Look at that boy, how he’s dressed!’ / ‘Look how that boy is dressed!’

Nonetheless, this optionality might well be only apparent, with the presence or absence of DOM reflecting different underlying structures and the varying verbal status of *talè*. When DOM is present, *talè* is introducing an object DP, as typical of a transitive verb, which in turn can be followed by a clause such as the exclamative clause in (25a,b). By contrast, when DOM is absent, *talè* acts as a discourse marker and introduces the entire clause in which the DP is as a topicalized subject. We have attempted to reflect this distinction in the English translations of the examples in (25).⁸

On the basis of the data and observations discussed in this section, we can conclude that *talè* is an invariable discourse marker which, like other verb-based discourse markers in other Romance languages, shows

both verbal and non-verbal properties.⁹ *Talè* shares several features with its counterparts in other Romance languages, yet it also exhibits notable differences. The most striking distinctions are as follows. First, from a morphological perspective, *talè* is entirely invariable, lacking any inflected forms and resisting the addition of clitics. Second, in terms of syntax, while similar discourse markers in other Romance languages can occupy various positions within a sentence (cf. §4), Sicilian *talè* is strictly confined to the initial position.

4. Pragmatic functions

The marker *talè* plays a crucial discourse role in Sicilian, particularly in managing attention and interaction. As is typical of discourse markers (Remberger 2021), *talè* does not contribute to the propositional content of the sentence but serves crucial pragmatic functions. It operates at the level of discourse organization and interaction, guiding the communication and shaping the interpretation of utterances. Its primary pragmatic functions, in line with its verb-based cognates in other Romance languages (see Fagard 2010, Waltereit 2002, Ghezzi 2012, Ghezzi & Molinelli 2014, Cardinaletti 2015, Sánchez López 2017, Badan 2020, Fuentes-Rodríguez 2020, Villalba 2024), include getting attention and expressing surprise.

As an attention-getter, *talè* directs the interlocutor's focus toward the content of the utterance that follows. If we go back to examples (6) and (7) above, for instance, we see that *talè* introduces a clause or phrase that the speaker deems noteworthy. In this use, its presence is in fact optional, because it is not syntactically integrated into the sentence structure, functioning instead as a pragmatic cue at the discourse level. In other words, it can be removed from the sentence without altering its propositional content.¹⁰

In this attention-getting function, *talè* can be followed by a vocative or appellative phrase, calling the attention of the addressee with the intention to encourage them to do something (7) and/or to evoke various emotions and attitudes in them (26):

(7') *Talè, figliu, cci li vò' jiri a purtari du' pira?*
'Look, (my) son, would you go and bring some pears to them?'
(Pitrè 3: 305)

(26) *Talè, Gaetana, finiscila vasinno' chiamu a mamma.*
'Look, Gaetana, stop it or else I'll call mum.'
(Anzalone, *Pipispezzi*, 1981/1995, p. 2)

When *talè* directs attention to information that is not only new and relevant but also unexpected, it takes on the characteristics of a mirative marker. In this function, *talè* expresses the speaker's emotional and evaluative stance toward a situation or state of affairs. This mirative function is widely recognized as one of the most common uses of *talè*, as documented in dictionaries (cf., e.g., Piccitto & Tropea 1977-2002) and corroborated by native speakers.

The emotional effect resulting from the unexpected information highlighted by *talè* varies depending on contextual and pragmatic factors. While the default reaction might be surprise, other responses, such as annoyance or frustration, can also arise. For example, in (24a) and (27), *talè* introduces information perceived by the speaker as noteworthy but potentially irritating. These variations align with Sánchez López's (2017) analysis of Spanish *mira*, a cognate marker with similar functions. Following her analysis of *mira* in specific syntactic contexts (cf. §1), we propose that *talè* serves as a mirative marker, highlighting its associated clause as new and unexpected information. The specific emotional response – whether surprise, annoyance, or another affective reaction – is shaped by contextual conditions or by the exclamative illocutionary force of the utterance. The choice of reduplication (cf. (8) and (20) above) or intonation often intensifies its emotive force.

- (27) *Talè, bedda mia, ora basta!*
'Look, my dear, now stop it!'
(Anzalone, *Pipìspezzi*, 1981/1995, p. 5)

Italian *guarda* and Spanish *mira* can appear in different positions within the sentence, including the clause-final position (see Bazzanella 2001, Waltereit 2002, Fagard 2010, Ghezzi 2012, Ghezzi & Molinelli 2014, 2015 on Italian *guarda*, and Pons Bordería 1998, Portolés 1998, Tanghe & Jansegers 2014, Sánchez López 2017, Fuentes-Rodríguez 2020, González López & Trotzke 2021, Villalba 2024 on Spanish *mira*). González López & Trotzke (2021) take this syntactic flexibility as evidence for the analysis of *mira* as a phrasal parenthetical, which syntactically and pragmatically behave similarly to discourse markers operating at the level of the illocutionary force. In this function, *mira* acts as a watershed element partitioning the clause into topical and focal information (cf. §1).

Sicilian *talè* predominantly occurs at the beginning of the clause and does not share the same syntactic flexibility as its Romance cognates.¹¹ This implies that *talè* does not exhibit any information-structural watershed function similar to that of Spanish *mira*. Its only connection to information structure is to be viewed in relation to its discourse struc-

turing function: in narrative contexts, *talè* is frequently employed to signal a shift in focus or to foreground critical elements of the story. This is exemplified that both in its attention-getting function and in its mirative usage *talè* emphasizes unexpected developments or new information.

In sum, the pragmatic versatility of *talè* reflects its dual role as an attention-directing device and an expressive marker of the speaker’s evaluative stance. These functions are related to the organization of the discourse and to the linguistic means of conveying subtle shades of emotion and attitude, but can also be seen as a reinforcement of the informational structure of the utterance (see also Sánchez López 2017: 497).

5. Development of the pragmatic functions and grammaticalization

The diachronic evolution of discourse markers derived from perception verbs has been widely examined in linguistic studies, with a general consensus that their grammaticalization is triggered by the inherent deictic properties of the source verb (see, e.g., Sweetser 1993, Pons Bordería 1998, Waltereit 2002, Ocampo 2009, Fagard 2010, Ghezzi & Molinelli 2014, 2015). Following this framework, we argue that *talè* has undergone a similar evolutionary trajectory. This development is illustrated in Table 1, adapted from Ghezzi & Molinelli (2015: 129) with the addition of the mirative function:

a.	direct the sight toward something in the deictic context	DEICTIC	
b.	direct the attention toward the process of enunciation	ATTENTION GETTING	
c.	direct the attention toward the content of utterance		
d.	direct the attention toward the unexpected content of the utterance		MIRATIVE
e.	speaker’s expression of surprise		

Table 1. Pragmatic functions and development path.

Two remarks about the diachronic evolution of the pragmatic functions of *talè* are in order. First of all, when compared with its Romance counterparts, *talè* presents a unique development in that it has lost the purely deictic function traditionally associated with the imperative form of the perception verb (i.e. function *a* in Table 1). This purely deictic function, an invitation to direct sight toward a specific object or person,

remains restricted to the second-person singular imperative form *talìa*.¹² Unlike *talìa*, *talè* exclusively serves as an attention-getter or a mirative marker expressing a subjective evaluation of the situation rather than a neutral directive to observe. A comparison of the examples in (28) underscores this distinction:

- (28) a. *Talìa dda casa. Ti piaci?*
‘Look at that house. Do you like it?’
b. *Talè dda casa! Ti piaci?*
‘Look at that house! Do you like it?’

In (28a), the interpretation is neutral and deictic, suggesting an objective request for the interlocutor to look at the house. In contrast, as indicated by the exclamation mark, (28b) conveys an evaluative stance, implying that the house possesses some unexpected or notable qualities (cf. function *d* in Table 1). This highlights the loss of deictic neutrality in *talè*, which consistently encodes the speaker’s subjective perspective.¹³

The second remark has to do with the syntactic correlates of the pragmatic functions in Table 1. In the functions that fall within the macrocategory of attention-getting, *talè* is integrated in the sentence by means of evident syntactic relations with the following constituent or clause (cf. §3). In its mirative usage (function *e*), instead, *talè* is generally independent and it behaves like an autonomous speech act. Function *d* is simultaneously attention-getting and mirative, serving as bridge in the evolution of the pragmatic functions associated with *talè*, which is characterized by a final shift of the perspectival centre from the addressee to the speaker, who expresses surprise upon the sudden realization of a situation.

The development of a mirative meaning via the attention-getting function has been independently observed by Scivoletto (2025) for the Sicilian discourse marker *bì* (see also Scivoletto 2022, 2023). As shown in examples (29) and (30), this marker, which can also be realized as *mbi* or *vih* depending on the specific dialect, conveys a mirative value of wonder and surprise:

- (29) *Mbiiiii chi priuuu!*
‘Oh, what a joy!’
(Scivoletto 2025: 187)

- (30) – “Figghiu mio, (dici) e sta chiavi?” – “Vih! comu mi lu scurdavi!”
‘My son, he says, and what about this key?’ ‘ Oh, how could I forget it!’
(Pitrè 1873: 46, cited in Scivoletto 20025: 192)

Based on diachronic evidence, Scivoletto (2025) argues that the development of this discourse marker originates from the full impera-

tive form of the verb *vidiri* ‘to see’, that is *vidi*. While it initially conveyed the literal meaning of visual perception, an additional, inferred function serving to capture attention begins to emerge as early as the 14th century. Gradually, a reduced variant of the form comes to be employed primarily with an attention-getting function, that is, to attract and guide the interlocutor’s attention. By the 19th century, this function becomes increasingly subjectified, culminating in the emergence of a discourse marker with a conventionalized meaning of mirativity or the expression of surprise. At this stage, the marker no longer operates to direct the interlocutor’s focus toward a topic of conversation; instead, it signals the speaker’s unexpected stance or reaction with respect to a given situation.

The parallel emergence of the mirative function of the discourse marker *bi* from its earlier attention-getting use reinforces our argument regarding *talè* and the developmental trajectory outlined in Table 1. While the deictic properties (of the source imperative verb) have been widely recognized as the key factor triggering the development and grammaticalization of discourse markers into attention-getting devices, the relationship between deixis and mirativity, particularly from a cognitive perspective, raises interesting and challenging questions. In this regard, Peterson (2016, 2020) suggests that mirativity can be viewed as a kind of deixis, insofar as the speaker’s indication of surprise functions similarly to a deictic act of pointing or referring. Deictic elements typically indicate a specific time, place, or person, whereas mirative markers point to an event or state of affairs that is perceived by the speaker as surprising or unexpected.¹⁴ From this perspective, the intermediate attention-getting stage becomes conceptually transparent: mirativity draws the attention of the conversational participants to surprising information that is contextually relevant to the speaker.

6. Syntactic analysis and representation

For the syntactic analysis of *talè*, we adopt the cartographic approach proposed by Speas & Tenny (2003), which posits the existence of Speech Act Projections (SAPs) to represent the roles of the speaker and hearer in the higher left periphery of the syntactic structure. These projections are organized hierarchically, with distinct positions for the speaker (saP) and the hearer (SAP). Drawing on Badan (2020), we assume that mirativity is encoded in a dedicated functional projection within the Speech Ach domain, that is, an EVALUATIVE PROJECTION

EvalP (see also Cinque 1999, Munaro & Obenauer 1999, Cruschina 2015, Hinterhölzl & Munaro 2015), as illustrated in (31):

- (31) [saP [EvalP [sa°]] [SAP [VocP SA°] [ForceP...]
 talè₂ talè₁ vocative ca

In this framework, we propose a dual syntactic role for *talè* based on its functional variation, distinguishing between the attention-getting and the mirative function:

(i) ATTENTION-GETTER *TALÈ* (*talè₁*): When *talè* functions as an attention-getting device, it occupies the head of *sa°* within the speaker’s projection (saP). In this position, *talè* encodes the speaker’s explicit request for the hearer’s attention, anchoring the discourse pragmatically. Frequently, the hearer is specified by a vocative phrase (VocP), which we follow Haegeman & Hill (2013) in placing in the specifier of SAP. This syntactic configuration accounts for examples such as (7), where *talè* directs the hearer’s focus and establishes an interactional link between the interlocutors:

- (7) *Talè, figliu, cci li vò’ jiri a purtari du’ pira?*
 ‘Look, (my) son, would you go and bring some pears to them?’
 (Pitrè 3: 305)

(ii) MIRATIVE MARKER *TALÈ* (*talè₂*): In its mirative use, *talè* occupies the head of the EvalP associated with *sa°* (see Badan 2020 on Italian *guarda te*).¹⁵ In this position, it encodes the speaker’s sense of unexpectedness or evaluative reaction toward the state of affairs.¹⁶ This role aligns with the subjective and expressive functions of *talè*, particularly in examples such as (25), where it conveys surprise or annoyance. The evaluative use highlights the speaker’s emotional engagement with the utterance, reinforcing its pragmatic significance.

- (27’) *Talè, bedda mia, ora basta!*
 ‘Look, my dear, now stop it!’
 (Anzalone, *Pipispezzi*, 1981/1995, p. 5)

When *talè* functions simultaneously as an attention-getter and a mirative marker (cf. function *d*, Table 1), we assume that it still occupies EvalP (*talè₂*), but this position is somehow connected to the lower *sa°* via agreement. Even if our representation implies that *talè* realizes an independent speech act, in this function *talè* is syntactically linked to the rest of the sentence. It is important to emphasize, however, that this linkage does not amount to subordination. For example, when *talè* is followed by

a clause introduced by the complementizer *ca* (e.g. in (24a)), the structure does not reflect traditional complementation:

- (24') a. *Talè ca sparti s'arrabbia!*
 'Look (that) he is even getting angry!'
 (Anzalone, 'Mprestami a to' muggghieri, 1982/1996, p.12)

Instead, we interpret *ca* as a root clause complementizer (see, e.g., Cruschina & Remberger 2018 and reference therein; see also Badan 2020: 328). In this capacity, *ca* functions to connect the expressive force of *talè* with the propositional content of the clause, maintaining the clause's syntactic independence while marking its discourse-level relevance.

As an independent speech act, *talè* can call for the hearer's attention and/or express speaker's surprise. What about the regular imperative form *talìa*? Even when it is used as a discourse marker, *talìa* preserves the JUSSIVE and DIRECTIVE meaning of imperatives, denoting a property of the proposition rather than an independent speech act. We therefore argue that *talìa* is not an independent speech act. In fact, unlike *talè*, it is incompatible with questions or requests, showing that its usage is limited to declarative clauses:

- (32) a. *Talè/*Talìa, nisciamu stasira?*
 'Look/listen, shall we go out tonight?'
 b. *Talè/*Talìa, m'ù pua fari un piaciri?*
 'Look/listen, can you do me a favour?'

Based on these considerations, we claim that *talìa* occupies a lower position within the left periphery, that is, the Jussive Phrase (see Zanuttini 2008, Zanuttini *et al.* 2012, Menza & Bianchi 2023), which is endowed with an interpretable 2SG feature. This lower position is confirmed by its possible co-occurrence with *talè*, which can only precede *talìa* (33); it also seems that vocatives usually precede *talìa* (34). By incorporating this element into our cartographic representation, we obtain the illustration shown in (35):¹⁷

- (33) a. *Talè, talìa cu s'arricampà!*
 b. *??Talìa, talè cu s'arricampà!*
 'Look, look who just came!'

- (34) *Matri, vossa talìa ch' è bedda chista...*
 mother you.POL look what is beautiful this
 'Mother, look how beautiful this is...'
 (Pitrè 4: 237)

- (35) [saP [EvalP [sa°]] [SAP [VocP SA°] [ForceP...] [JussiveP [Juss°]] ...
talè₂ talè₁ vocative ca talìa

It is also interesting to notice that when compared to its Romance cognates, *talìa* is also much less flexible, being syntactically limited to the sentence-initial position. In our data, moreover, *talìa* as a discourse marker is much less frequent than *talè*. In the four volumes by Pitrè, for instance, we find 48 occurrences of *talìa* and 26 of *talè*, but while *talè* must be analysed as a discourse marker in all its instances, in 45 occurrences out of 48 *talìa* behaves as an imperative verb. The limited use of *talìa* as a discourse marker can likely be attributed to its competition with *talè*, in the sense that the presence of an element that has already developed more advanced pragmatic functions has most likely impeded or hindered *talìa*'s evolution as a discourse marker.

7. Conclusions

Although *talè* does not synchronically resemble a regular verb, it exhibits key properties characteristic of verb-based discourse markers in Romance languages, displaying both verbal and non-verbal traits. As noted in previous literature on similar discourse markers, from a diachronic perspective, its pragmatic functions – such as serving as an attention-getter and a mirative marker – likely emerged from its verbal deictic properties. However, in contemporary usage, its deictic value is consistently intertwined with its pragmatic functions, suggesting a process of pragmatic specialization, in contrast to *talìa*.

While certain instances of grammatical integration with subsequent constituents (such as a DP or a CP) may appear to indicate structural incorporation, these cases are better understood as only apparent: we are dealing with monoclausal structures where *talè* functions as an independent speech act encoded in the left periphery of the sentence. Indeed, the pragmatic functions of *talè* can be effectively represented within a cartographic framework, where its role as an attention-getting marker is linked to the speaker and their request for the hearer's attention, while its mirative function reflects the speaker's evaluative stance. This structured approach provides a valuable foundation for future research into the interplay between deixis, discourse markers, discourse participants, and grammaticalization processes in Romance languages and beyond.

This study on Sicilian *talè* therefore contributes to several areas of linguistic research. As a discourse marker, *talè* enriches our understanding of how pragmatic markers emerge and operate in spoken language. Its interactional and expressive functions parallel those of similar markers across diverse languages, providing an example on how mirativ-

ity can develop from deixis. For what concerns language variation and change, the invariable nature of *talè* raises questions about its potential further grammaticalization, and its pragmatic specialization as a mirative marker makes the comparison with *talìa* relevant to our understanding of functional competition and complementation across similar elements. Future studies could explore whether similar markers in other languages undergo comparable changes over time.

Abbreviations

1, 2, 3 = first, second, third person; ACC = accusative; DOM = differential object marker; IMP = imperative; INF = infinitive; NEG = negation; NOM = nominative; PL = plural; POL = polite; PRS = present tense; PST = past tense; REFL = reflexive; SAP = Speech Act Projection; SBJV = subjunctive; SG = singular.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions, which have greatly improved this article. I am also grateful to the audiences at the *18th Cambridge Italian Dialect Syntax-Morphology Meeting* (CIDSM 18, The University of Manchester, 25-27 June 2024) and the *Ghent Generative Grammar Group* (G4, Ghent University, 8 May 2025) for their feedback on earlier versions of this work, as well as to Cristina Guardiano and Giulio Scivoletto for helpful discussions on specific aspects of the data. All remaining errors are mine alone.

Notes

¹ In this paper, we adopt a broad definition of discourse markers, encompassing all discourse or pragmatic functional elements that contribute to structuring discourse, managing information flow, and signalling speaker attitudes. See Remberger (2021) and Hansen & Visconti (2024).

² Most of the data discussed in this paper are drawn from written sources, with full bibliographic details provided at the end of the article. The number following ‘Pitrè’ refers to the volume in this collection of fairy tales, novellas, and folk stories. When no source is specified, the examples originate from the Sicilian dialect of Mussomeli.

³ Sánchez López (2017: 492) points out a difference between Italian *guarda* and Spanish *mira*. While the verb-based marker tends to agree in number with the main verb in Italian (cf. 13a,b), in Spanish either the singular *mira* or the plural *mirad* can be used in a sentence featuring a plural verb:

(i)	{ <i>Mira</i> / <i>mirad</i> }	<i>tenéis que</i>	<i>marcharos</i>	<i>ahora.</i>
	look.2SG	look.2PL have.2PLthat	leave.INF.REFL	now
		‘Look, you have to get going now.’		

¹ⁿ In this sense, Sicilian behaves like Italian: the singular *talia* is only used with a singular addressee. Note that if we replace the plural *taliati* in (15) with invariable *talè*, the latter can only have a mirative meaning with no deictic value (cf. §§4-5), suggesting that *talè* cannot be used deictically with a plural addressee.

⁴ On the periphrastic construction in (18) with two inflected verbs, see Cardinaletti & Giusti (2001), Cruschina (2013, 2022) and Di Caro (2019).

⁵ Interestingly, the imperative properties and restrictions of *talè* are shared by the reduced or truncated imperatives *tè* 'hold, take' (cf. Piccitto & Tropea 1977-2002: s.v. *tè!*) and *mu* 'give (me)', a form of uncertain origin, possibly derived from the verb *dari* 'give' or *ammustrari* 'show' (Piccitto & Tropea 1977-2002: s.v. *ammù*). The latter form appears to have a more limited geographical distribution, though it is attested in central Sicilian dialects, such as in the province of Caltanissetta. Both monosyllabic imperatives are morphological invariable and cannot host clitics, yet they can be used in the pronominal polite imperative structure as *sa tè* and *sa mu* in the dialect of Mussomeli. On the special properties of monosyllabic imperatives, see Floricic & Molinu (2003, 2012).

⁶ The sentence in (24b) is the only example in our data in which *talè* occurs at the end of the sentence. It must be noted, however, that here we have a repetition, with the final *talè* reinforcing or reiterating the sentence-initial occurrence. In this sense, the final *talè* could be viewed as external to the previous clause.

⁷ On the subject enclitic *-tu* (cf. *eritu* 'you were') in (23b), see Cruschina & Rinollo (2013).

⁸ Of course, this preliminary and tentative explanation of the apparent optionality requires further investigation in future work. I am grateful to Cristina Guardiano for an insightful discussion on this point.

⁹ See also Menza (2006) on the notion of 'paraverbo', that is, a linguistic term or expression that show verbal properties in spite of the fact that it is not a verb.

¹⁰ An exception to this optionality arises when *talè* assumes a deictic role at the textual level, as observed in example (23a). In such cases, it serves to present particularly relevant or actionable information, such as specific instructions or directives. Here, *talè* plays a more integrated role, linking the utterance to the surrounding discourse context and emphasizing its importance to address a problem or resolve an issue.

¹¹ Interestingly, mirative *guarda te* is also restricted to the sentence-initial position (Badan 2020: 308). In contrast, the situation is different for Spanish mirative *mira*, which can also occur in sentence-final position where "it reinforces the utterance underlining the preceding information as new or unexpected for the addressee" (Sánchez López 2017: 497).

¹² The purely deictic function is, of course, also available with the plural and the polite singular form (cf. §3).

¹³ In the case of *talè*, we can argue that, although the deictic properties underlying its grammaticalization are no longer fully transparent, they do originate from the source verb in its imperative form. It is true that deictic or ostensive markers also exhibit inherent deictic properties even without a verbal origin as in the case of Italian *ecco* (see De Cesare 2010). However, in the case of *talè*, we follow the hypothesis of a verbal derivation, despite its irregular and unexpected final vowel (cf. §2). The deictic features remain evident in contexts of textual deixis, as in the example (23a) above, although this function could also be interpreted as a request to direct the attention toward the content of the following utterance, similar to function *c* in Table 1.

¹⁴ An explicit link between deixis and mirativity is observed in Neo-Aramaic, where, as Napiorkowska (2016) notes, presentatives and near deictics can take on mirative semantic extensions. She explains: "The connection between the deictic reference and the expression of surprise is the pointing to an event immediately relevant to the speaker" (Napiorkowska 2016: 15).

¹⁵ In her analysis of *guarda te*, Badan (2020) distinguishes between *Surprise guarda te* (SGT) and *Obvious guarda te* (OGT). SGT “expresses an emotional and evaluative attitude of surprise (unexpectedness) of the speaker towards a certain state of affairs”, while OGT “expresses the speaker’s commitment towards a situation that is evident to her; it conveys an obvious confirmation together with a sense of authority and superiority, sometimes also with a hint of irony” (Badan 2020: 305, 306). A sense of obviousness can sometimes be associated with Sicilian *talè*, also conveying a similar nuance of authority and superiority. However, we believe that obviousness counts as a type of mirativity, with a reversed scale of expectations. With respect to the relationship between unexpectedness and obviousness, Cruschina (2021: 22) states: “Both unexpectedness and obviousness result from a violation of the expectations. Unexpectedness involves the assertion of a less likely alternatives in contrast to more likely alternatives; obviousness, on the contrary, involves the attempt to assert and restore the most likely alternative, which according to the speaker should be already part of the common knowledge, beliefs, and expectations shared by the interlocutors”. In this sense, both unexpectedness and obviousness can be the source of a mirative effect of surprise.

¹⁶ EvalP could be seen as functionally equivalent to Krifka’s (2023) Judge Phrase, which is adopted in Villalba’s (2024) analysis of exclamative markers.

¹⁷ We could hypothesize that *talè* may also sometimes occur in Juss°, for instance when it is used to give instructions (cf. example (23a) above). We leave this issue open to future research.

Sources of the examples

Anzalone, Pippo 1981/1995. *Pipispezzi*. <copioni.corrierespettacolo.it/anzalone-pippo-pipispezzi >.

Anzalone, Pippo 1982/1996. *Mprestami a to’ mughghieri*. <copioni.corrierespettacolo.it/anzalone-pippo-mprestami-a-to-mughghieri >.

ARTESIA: Corpus Artesia 2016. *Archivio Testuale del Siciliano Antico*. Mario Pagano, Salvatore Arcidiacono & Ferdinando Raffaele. Università di Catania – Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani. <artesia.unict.it/corpus >.

Camilleri, Andrea 2020. *Riccardino*. Palermo: Sellerio.

Pirandello, Luigi 2002. *Tutto il teatro in dialetto*. Edited by Sarah Zappulla Muscarà. Bologna: Bompiani.

Pitrè, Giuseppe [1875] 1985. *Fiabe, novelle e racconti popolari siciliani*. 4 volumes. Sala Bolognesi: Forni.

Pitrè, Giuseppe 1913. *La famiglia, la casa, la vita del popolo siciliano*. Palermo: A. Reber [reprinted by Forni, Bologna, 1980].

Bibliographical References

Amari, Michele 1854. *Storia dei musulmani in Sicilia*. Florence: Le Monnier.

Anzalone. See *Sources of the examples* above.

ARTESIA. See *Sources of the examples* above.

- Badan, Linda 2020. Italian discourse markers: The case of *guarda te*. *Studia Linguistica* 74,2. 303-336.
- Bazzanella, Carla 1995. I segnali discorsivi. In Renzi, Lorenzo; Salvi, Giampaolo & Cardinaletti, Anna (eds.), *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione. Volume III*. Bologna: Il Mulino. 225-257.
- Camilleri. See *Sources of the examples* above.
- Cardinaletti, Anna & Giusti, Giuliana 2001. 'Semi-lexical' motion verbs in Romance and Germanic. In Corver, Norbert & van Riemsdijk, Henk (eds.), *Semi-lexical Categories. The Function of Content Words and the Content of Function Words*. Berlin: De Gruyter. 371-414.
- Cardinaletti, Anna 2015. Italian verb-based discourse particles in a comparative perspective. In Bayer, Joseph; Hinterhölzl, Roland & Trotzke, Andreas (eds.), *Discourse-Oriented Syntax*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 71-91.
- Cinque, Guglielmo 1999. *Adverbs and Functional Projections: A cross-linguistic perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cruschina, Silvio 2013. Beyond the stem and inflectional morphology: An irregular pattern at the level of periphrasis. In Cruschina, Silvio; Maiden, Martin & Smith, John Charles (eds.), *The Boundaries of Pure Morphology: Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 262-283.
- Cruschina, Silvio 2014. *Sabbenedica* e l'imperativo di cortesia. *Bollettino del Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani* 25. 385-404.
- Cruschina, Silvio 2015. The expression of evidentiality and epistemicity: Cases of grammaticalization in Italian and Sicilian. *Probus* 27. 1-31.
- Cruschina, Silvio 2021. The greater the contrast, the greater the potential: On the effects of focus in syntax. *Glossa: A journal of general linguistics* 6,1: 3. 1-30.
- Cruschina, Silvio 2022. Gone unexpectedly: Pseudo-coordination and the expression of surprise. In Giusti, Giuliana; Di Caro, Vincenzo Nicolò & Ross, Daniel (eds.), *Pseudo-Coordination and Multiple Agreement Constructions*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 130-148.
- Cruschina, Silvio & Rinollo, Melanie 2013. Between subject enclitic and agreement marker: The second person endings in Sicilian. *Transactions of the Philological Society* 111,3. 259-273.
- Cruschina, Silvio & Remberger, Eva-Maria 2018. Speaker-oriented syntax and root clause complementizers. *Linguistic variation* 18,2. 336-358.
- De Cesare, Anna-Maria 2010. Gli impieghi di *ecco* nel parlato conversazionale e nello scritto giornalistico. In Ferrari, Angela & De Cesare, Anna-Maria (eds.), *Il parlato nella scrittura italiana odierna. Riflessioni in prospettiva testuale*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang. 105-147.
- Di Caro, Vincenzo Nicolò 2019. *Multiple agreement constructions in southern Italo-Romance. The syntax of Sicilian Pseudo-Coordination*. Ca' Foscari University of Venice, PhD dissertation.
- Fagard, Benjamin 2010. *É vida, olha ...* : Imperatives as discourse markers and grammaticalization paths in Romance. *Languages in Contrast* 10,2. 245-267.
- Floricić, Franck & Molinu, Lucia 2003. Imperativi 'monosillabici' e 'Minimal Word' in italiano 'standard' e in sardo. In Giacomo-Marcellesi, Mathée & Rocchetti, Alvaro (eds.), *Il verbo italiano: studi diacronici, sincronici, contrastivi, didattici*. Rome: Bulzoni. 343-357.

- Floritic, Franck & Molinu, Lucia 2012. Romance monosyllabic imperatives and markedness. In Stolz, Thomas; Nau, Nicole & Stroh, Cornelia (eds.), *Monosyllables. From phonology to typology*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag. 149-172.
- Fuentes-Rodríguez, Catalina 2020. “Mira”/“mira que”: construcciones, contexto argumentativo y funciones relacionales. *RILCE, Revista de Filología Hispánica* 36. 941-966.
- Ghezzi, Chiara 2012. *Guarda, secondo me stai sbagliando!* Marcatori interazionali da verbi di percezione in italiano contemporaneo. In Pîrvu, Elena (ed.), *La lingua e la letteratura italiana in Europa. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi di Craiova*. Craiova: Editura Universitaria Craiova. 143-163.
- Ghezzi, Chiara & Molinelli, Piera 2014. Italian *guarda, prego, dai*. Pragmatic markers and the left and right periphery. In Beeching, Kate & Detges, Ulrich (eds.), *Discourse Functions at the Left and Right Periphery*. Leiden: Brill. 117-150.
- Ghezzi, Chiara & Molinelli, Piera 2015. Segnali allocutivi di richiamo: percorsi pragmatici e sviluppi diacronici tra latino e italiano. *Cuadernos de Filología Italiana* 22. 21-47.
- González López, Laura & Trotzke, Andreas 2021. ¡Mira! The grammar-attention interface in the Spanish left periphery. *The Linguistic Review* 38. 5-31.
- Guardiano, Cristina 2023. Differential object marking in a dialect of Sicily. In Irimia, Monica Alexandrina & Mardale, Alexandru (eds.), *Differential Object Marking in Romance: Towards microvariation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 192-231.
- Haegeman, Liliane & Hill, Virginia 2013. The syntacticization of discourse. In Folli, Raffaella; Sevdali, Christina & Truswell, Robert (eds.), *Syntax and its limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 370-390.
- Hansen, Maj-Britt Mosegaard & Visconti, Jacqueline (eds.) 2024. *Manual of Discourse Markers in Romance*. Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter.
- Hinterhölzl, Roland & Munaro, Nicola 2015. On the interpretation of modal particles in non-assertive speech acts in German and Bellunese. Bayer, Joseph; Hinterhölzl, Roland & Trotzke, Andreas (eds.), *Discourse-Oriented Syntax*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 41-70.
- Krifka, Manfred 2023. Layers of assertive clauses: propositions, judgements, commitments, acts. In Hartmann, Jutta M. & Wöllstein, Angelika (eds.), *Propositionale Argumente im Sprachvergleich / Propositional arguments in cross-linguistic research. Theorie und Empirie / Theoretical and empirical issues*. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto. 115-181.
- López, Laura González & Trotzke, Andreas 2021. ¡Mira! The grammar-attention interface in the Spanish left periphery. *The Linguistic Review* 38. 5-31.
- Martín Zorraquino, María Antonia & Portolés Lázaro, José 1999. Los marcadores del discurso. In Bosque, Ignacio & Demonte, Violeta (eds.), *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe. 4051-4213.
- Menza, Salvatore & Bianchi, Valentina 2023. Cooperativity markers in the left periphery. Evidence from Sicilian and from Lombard Italian. *Probus* 35. 99-125.
- Menza, Salvo 2006. *Il paraverbo: L'interiezione come sottoclasse del verbo*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.
- Munaro, Nicola & Obeanuer, Hans-Georg 1999. On underspecified *wh*-elements

The discourse marker talè 'look' in Sicilian and the development of mirativity

- in pseudo-interrogatives. *University of Venice Working Papers in Linguistics* 9,1-2. 181-253.
- Ocampo, Francisco 2009. *Mirá*: From verb to discourse particle in Rioplatense Spanish. In Collettine, Joseph et al. (eds.), *Selected Proceedings of the 11th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium*. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. 254-267.
- Peterson, Tyler 2016. Mirativity as surprise: Evidentiality, information, and deixis. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 45. 1327-1357.
- Peterson, Tyler 2020. Mirativity in Morphology. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics*.
- Piccitto, Giorgio & Tropea, Giovanni 1977-2002. *Vocabolario siciliano*. Catania: Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani / Opera del vocabolario siciliano.
- Pirandello. See *Sources of the examples* above.
- Pitrè, Giuseppe 1995 [1875]. *Grammatica siciliana*. Palermo: Sellerio.
- Pitrè 1985 [1875] and Pitrè 1913. See *Sources of the examples* above.
- Pons Bordería, Salvador 1998. *Oye y mira* a los límites de la conexión. In Martín Zorraquino, María Antonia & Montolío Durán, Estrella (eds.), *Marcadores discursivos. Teoría y análisis*. Madrid: Arco Libros. 213-228.
- Portolés, José 1998. *Marcadores del discurso*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Remberger, Eva-Maria 2021. Discourse and pragmatic markers in the Romance Languages. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics*.
- Ruffino, Giovanni & Sottile, Roberto 2015. *Parole migranti tra oriente e occidente*. Palermo: Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani.
- Sánchez López, Cristina 2017. Mirativity in Spanish. The case of the particle *mira*. *Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 15,2. 489-514.
- Scivoletto, Giulio 2022. *Discourse Markers in Sicily. A Synchronic, Diachronic, and Sociolinguistic Analysis*. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
- Scivoletto, Giulio 2023. Il siciliano *bi* e l'espressione della miratività. *Cuadernos de Filología Italiana* 30. 189-206.
- Scivoletto, Giulio 2025. Mirativity as a semantic notion: The trajectory and status of Sicilian *bì*. In Rodríguez Rosique, Susana (ed.), *Expressing Surprise at the Crossroads: Mirativity, Exclamativity and Cooptation in Romance Languages*. Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter Mouton. 179-202.
- Sottile, Roberto 2016. *Le parole del tempo perduto*. Marsala: Navarra.
- Speas, Peggy & Tenny, Carol L. 2003. Configurational properties of point of view roles. In Di Sciullo, Anna Maria (ed.), *Asymmetry in Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 315-344.
- Sweetser, Eve 1993. *From Etymology to Pragmatics: Metaphorical and cultural aspects of semantic structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tanghe, Sanne & Jansegers, Marlies 2014. Marcadores del discurso derivados de los verbos de percepción: Un análisis comparativo entre el español y el italiano. *Revue Romane: Langue et littérature* 50. 30-50.
- Varvaro, Alberto 2014. *Vocabolario storico-etimologico del siciliano*. Palermo: Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani.
- Villalba, Xavier 2024. Romance exclamative markers at the syntax-pragmatics interface: A compositional approach to exclamativity. *Journal of Pragmatics* 226. 64-77.

- Waltereit, Richard 2002. Imperatives, interruption in conversation, and the rise of discourse markers: a study of Italian *guarda*. *Linguistics* 40. 987-1010.
- Zanuttini, Raffaella 2008. Encoding the addressee in the syntax: Evidence from English imperative subjects. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 26,1. 185-218.
- Zanuttini, Raffaella; Pak, Miok & Portner, Paul 2012. A syntactic analysis of interpretive restrictions on imperative, promissive, and exhortative subjects. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 30. 1231-1274.