

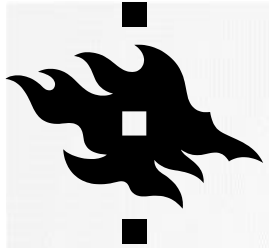
Anglia Ruskin–Cambridge Romance Linguistics Seminars

11 May 2021

Ignorance and competence in polar questions: Discourse particles in Sicilian

Silvio Cruschina

(based on joint work with Valentina Bianchi, University of Siena)



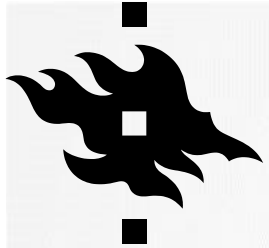
Introduction

Particles in polar questions: semantic and information-structure function

- (1) a. Olli ajoi illalla kaupunkiin.
Olli drove evening-ADE town-ILL
'In the evening Olli drove into town.'
b. Ajoin-ko Olli illalla kaupunkiin?
drove-Q Olli evening-ADE town-ILL
'Did Olli drive into town in the evening?'

Finnish (Holmberg 2014: 266-267)

- (2) a. Olli-ko ajoi illalla kaupunkiin?
Olli-Q drove evening-ADE town-ILL
'Did **Olli** drive into town in the evening?' /
'Was it Olli who drove into town in the evening.'
b. Kaupunkiin-ko Olli ajoi illalla?
town-ILL-Q Olli drove evening-ILL
'Did Olli drive into **town** in the evening.'
c. Illalla-ko Olli ajoi kaupunkiin?
evening-ADE-Q Olli drove town-ILL
'Did Olli drive into town in the **evening**?'

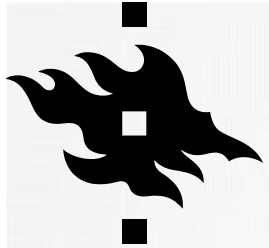


Introduction

Particles in polar questions: pragmatic functions → ‘discourse particles’

- Subtle interpretive distinctions intrinsically tied to matters of context and discourse participants:
 - bias with respect to the answer
 - request for a confirmation on the basis of a strong presupposition
 - contrast against expectations
 - a rhetorical effect
 - expression of surprise

(see, e.g., Munaro & Poletto 2003, 2008, Garzonio 2004, Obenauer 2004 on Italo-Romance dialects).

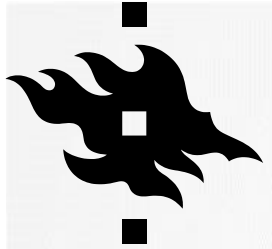


Introduction

In this talk

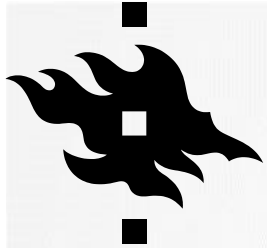
- Distribution and functions of two optional particles found in polar questions (PQs) in **central Sicilian**: *chi* and *cusà*.

- (3) (Chi) ci veni ta frati au vattisimu?
PTC LOC comes your brother to-the Christening
'Is your brother coming to the Christening?'
- (4) Cusà (chi) jà deci euro di mi mpristari?
PTC PTC have.PRS.2SG ten euros to me=lend.INF
'Could I (perhaps) borrow ten euros off you?'



Outline

1. The Sicilian particles *chi* and *cusà*
2. Default assumptions in canonical and non-canonical questions
3. The distribution of *chi* and *cusà*
4. The analysis: Ignorance and competence implicatures
5. Anchoring the particles
6. Conclusions



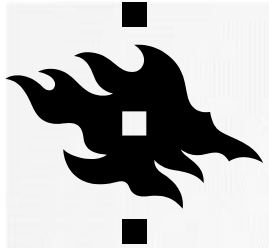
1. The Sicilian particles

2.1 The particle *chi*

(3') (Chi) ci veni ta frati au vattisimu?
PTC LOC comes your brother to-the Christening
'Is your brother coming to the Christening?'

- (apparently) optional
- at the beginning of PQs
- unclear semantic/pragmatic contribution

(see Rohlf 196, Leone 1995, Cruschina 2012, Bianchi & Cruschina 2016).



1. The Sicilian particles

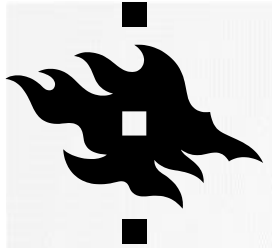
2.1 The particle *chi*

- Similar particles in other Romance varieties:

(5) Ce sta cchiovì? *Salentino* (Rohlfs 1969: 158)
PTC stay.PRS.3SG rain.PRS.3SG
'Is it raining?'

(6) Che ce l'hai una penna da prestarmi? *Romanesco*
PTC POSS=it=have.2SG a pen to lend=me
'Could you lend me a pen?'

☞ and in several other central and southern Italian varieties (Rohlfs 1969, Damonte & Garzonio 2009, Manzini & Savoia 2011, Cruschina 2012, Lusini 2013)



1. The Sicilian particles

2.1 The particle *chi*

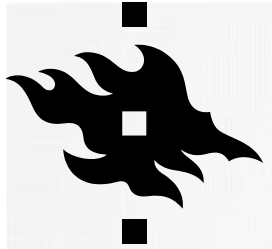
- Similar particles in other Romance varieties:

(6) Que hi és, la Maria?
PTC LOC is the Maria
'Is Maria there?'

Catalan

(7) (Que) puc fumar?
PTC can.1SG smoke.INF
'Can I smoke?'

(see Prieto & Rigau 2007, Kocher 2019)



1. The Sicilian particles

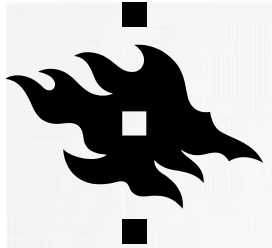
2.1 The particle *chi*

- **Origins** (Rohlf 1969: §757):

- a) from the declarative complementizer with an implicit truth predicate: ‘(is it true) that *p*?’
→ (root-clause) complementizer or complementizer-like element

- b) from a bi-clausal construction with *chi* ‘what’ expressing wonder or surprise: ‘What? *p*?’
→ reanalysis to monoclausal structure (Cruschina 2012, Lusini 2013)

☞ In central Sicilian dialects, *chi* is only homophonous to the wh-word (complementizer = *ca*)



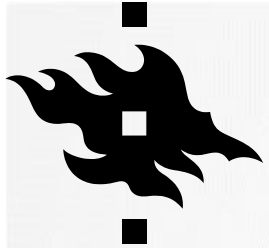
1. The Sicilian particles

2.1 The particle *chi*

- In polar questions only

Chi can only introduce PQs and is incompatible with wh-questions:

- (8) (*Chi) a cu vitti Giovanni?
PTC ACC who see.PST.3SG John
'Who did John see?'
(Bianchi & Cruschina 2016: 64)



1. The Sicilian particles

2.2 The particle *cusà*

- **Etymology**

from the wh-word *cu* ‘who’ and the verb *sa* ‘know’ (probably from *sàpi* ‘knows’ 3SG): *who knows*

- **Functions and meanings**

- not limited to interrogatives, very common in declaratives
- it can function as an interjection, as an adverb or as subordination conjunction
- it can express doubt, lack of knowledge, commitment modulation
- it can introduce a possible condition

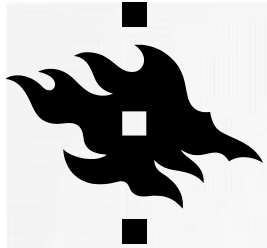
(see Piccitto & Tropea 1977-2002: s.v. *cusà*, Brucale et al. 2019)



1. The Sicilian particles

2.2 The particle *cusà*

- (9) a. Cusà ti chiamu cchiù tardu.
PTC you=call.PRS.1SG more late
'In case I'll call you later.' / 'I'll possibly/eventually call you later.'
- b. Cusà nisciti, l'accattati.
PTC go-out.PRS.2PL it=buy.PRS.2PL
'If you go out, buy it.'
(Brucale et al. 2019)
- (10) Trasi a machina nt'u magazzinu, cusà chiovi.
enter.IMP.2SG the car in-the garage PTC rain.PRS.3SG
'Put the car in the garage, in case it rains.'

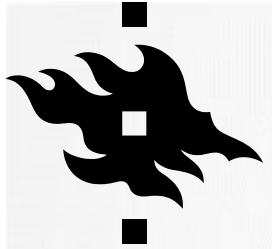


1. The Sicilian particles

2.2 The particle *cusà*

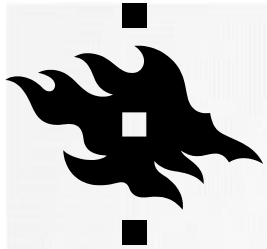
(4') Cusà (chi) jà deci euro di mi mpristari?
PTC PTC have.PRS.2SG ten euros to me=lend.INF
'Could I (perhaps) borrow ten euros off you?'

- **Pragmatic function in interrogatives:**
 - to tone down the force of the interrogation or request expressed by the PQ
 - 'downtoner' like epistemic adverbs (e.g. perhaps, possibly, maybe) (Sifianou 1999)



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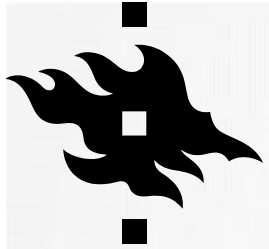


2. DEFAULT ASSUMPTIONS IN CANONICAL AND NON-CANONICAL QUESTIONS

2.1 Farkas (2020)

Canonical questions: default pragmatic assumptions

- (11)
- a. *Open issue*: The Speaker assumes that the issue she is introducing is not yet resolved in the input context.
 - b. *Speaker ignorance*: The Speaker presents herself as having an epistemic state that does not support commitment to any of the alternatives in the issue.
 - c. *Addressee competence*: The Speaker presents herself as assuming that the Addressee's epistemic state supports her commitment to the true alternative.
 - d. *Addressee compliance*: The Speaker presents herself as assuming that the Addressee will resolve the issue by publicly committing to the true alternative.

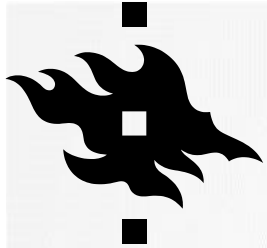


2. DEFAULT ASSUMPTIONS IN CANONICAL AND NON-CANONICAL QUESTIONS

- (11b) **Speaker Ignorance:** In a canonical information-seeking question, the speaker is ignorant about the propositional content.
- (11c) **Addressee Competence:** In a canonical information-seeking question, the source of information is the addressee, who is competent about the propositional content.

“... the engine driving the conversation is the wish to increase information that is mutually available to participants. [...] [In a question] Speaker ignorance follows from the fact that were the Speaker to think she knows which alternative in P is the true one, a more efficient way of increasing information would be to simply assert a declarative sentence that publicly commits her to that alternative.”

(Farkas 2020: 11-13)



2. DEFAULT ASSUMPTIONS IN CANONICAL AND NON-CANONICAL QUESTIONS

Non-canonical questions

When these default pragmatic assumptions do not hold

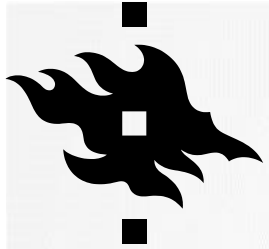
i) **Quiz questions:** [- Speaker Ignorance] [- Addressee Competence]

(12) *Is Sicily the biggest island of the Mediterranean Sea?*

ii) **Engaging questions:** [- Speaker Ignorance] [- Addressee Competence]

The source is not the addressee, but the group speaker+addressee(s):

(13) *Couldn't we take the car?*



2. DEFAULT ASSUMPTIONS IN CANONICAL AND NON-CANONICAL QUESTIONS

Non-canonical questions

When these default pragmatic assumptions do not hold.

iii) **Confirmation questions:** [- Speaker Ignorance] [+ Addressee Competence]

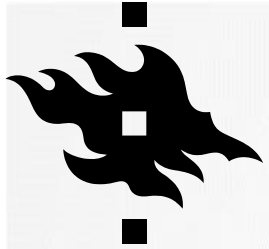
The Speaker has a positive bias towards the propositional content:

(14) *Am I coming with you then?*

iv) **Rhetorical questions:** [- Speaker Ignorance] [+ Addressee Competence]

They presuppose that the issue is closed in the context (Farkas 2020: 16)

(15) *Do we need three hours for such an easy exercise?*



2. DEFAULT ASSUMPTIONS IN CANONICAL AND NON-CANONICAL QUESTIONS

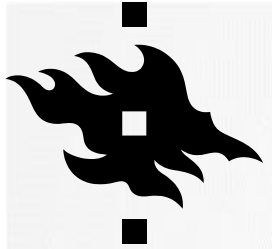
2.2 More types of non-canonical questions

- Non-standard questions (Munaro & Obenauer 2002, Obenauer 2004, Garzonio 2004)

v) ***Surprise/disapproval questions***: the speaker expresses incredulity or discontent
[- Speaker Ignorance] [+ Addressee Competence]

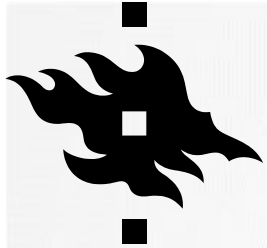
(16) *Who did you invite?!*

☞ also: can't-find-the-value interrogatives, exclamative interrogatives, imperative interrogatives



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3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

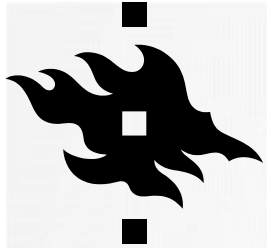
3.1 The distribution of *chi*

- (17) **Canonical questions** [+ Speaker Ignorance] [+ Addressee Competence]

(Chi) ci veni ta frati au vattisimu?
PTC LOC comes your brother to-the Christening
'Is your brother coming to the Christening?'

- (18) **Quiz questions** [- Speaker Ignorance] [- Addressee Competence]

(#Chi) a Sicilia (#chi) jè l'isula cchiù ranni d'u Mediterraneu?
PTC the Sicily PTC is the-island more big of-the Mediterranean
'Is Sicily the biggest island of the Mediterranean Sea?'



3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

3.1 The distribution of *chi*

- (19) **Engaging questions** [- Speaker Ignorance] [- Addressee Competence]

(#Chi) un putissimu pigliari a machina?

PTC not can.SBJV.PST.1PL take.INF the car

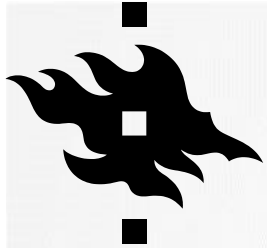
‘Couldn’t we take the car?’

- (20) **Confirmation questions** [- Speaker Ignorance] [+ Addressee Competence]

(Chi) viagnu cu vuantri?

PTC come.PRS.1SG with you.PL

‘Am I coming with you (then)?’



3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

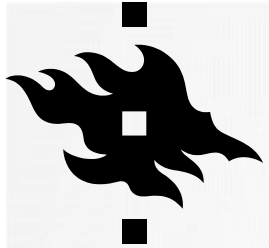
3.1 The distribution of *chi*

- (21) ***Rhetorical questions*** [- Speaker Ignorance] [+ Addressee Competence]

Chi si foddri?
PTC be.PRS.2SG crazy
'Are you crazy?'

- (22) ***Surprise/disapproval questions*** [- Speaker Ignorance] [+ Addressee Competence]

Chi dormi?
PTC sleep.PRS.3SG
'Is he (really) sleeping?!'

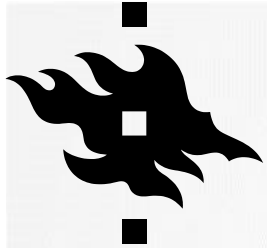


3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

3.1 The distribution of *chi*

QUESTION TYPE	SPEAKER IGNORANCE	ADDRESSEE COMPETENCE	<i>chi</i>
Canonical PQs	+	+	✓
Quiz PQs	-	-	#
Engaging PQs	-	-	#
Confirmation PQs	-	+	✓
Surprise PQs	-	+	✓
Rhetorical PQs	-	+	✓

☞ *Chi* is conventionally associated with Addressee Competence



3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

3.2 The distribution of *cusà*

- (23) **Canonical questions** [+ Speaker Ignorance] [+ Addressee Competence]

Cusà chi ci veni ta frati au vattisimu?

PRT PTC LOC comes your brother to-the Christening

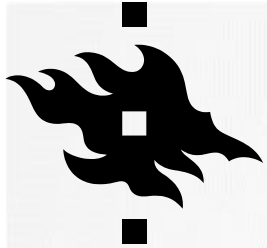
'Is your brother perhaps coming to the Christening?'

- (24) **Quiz questions** [- Speaker Ignorance] [- Addressee Competence]

(#Cusà) a Sicilia jè l'isula cchiù ranni d'u Mediterraneu?

PTC the Sicily is the-island more big of-the Mediterranean

'Is Sicily perhaps the biggest island of the Mediterranean Sea?'



3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

3.2 The distribution of *cusà*

(25) **Engaging questions** [- Speaker Ignorance] [- Addressee Competence]

(#Cusà) (#chi) un putissimu pigliari a machina?

PTC PTC not can.SBJV.PST.1PL take.INF the car

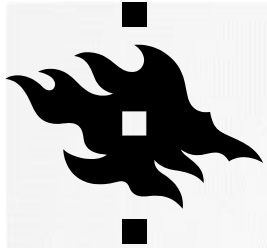
'Couldn't we perhaps take the car?'

(26) **Confirmation questions** [- Speaker Ignorance] [+ Addressee Competence]

(#Cusà) (chi) viagnu cu vuantri?

PTC PTC come.PRS.1SG with you.PL

'Am I coming with you (then)?'



3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

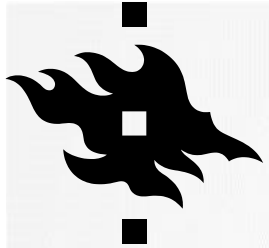
3.2 The distribution of *cusà*

- (27) **Rhetorical questions** [- Speaker Ignorance] [+ Addressee Competence]

(#Cusà) chi si foddri?
PTC PTC be.PRS.2SG crazy
'Are you crazy?'

- (28) **Surprise/disapproval questions** [- Speaker Ignorance] [+ Addressee Competence]

(#Cusà) chi dormi?
PTC PTC sleep.PRS.3SG
'Is he perhaps (really) sleeping?!'

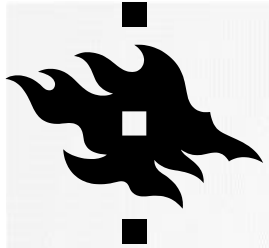


3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

3.2 The distribution of *cusà* & *chi*

QUESTION TYPE	SPEAKER IGNORANCE	ADDRESSEE COMPETENCE	chi	cusà
Canonical PQs	+	+	✓	✓
Quiz PQs	-	-	#	#
Engaging PQs	-	-	#	#
Confirmation PQs	-	+	✓	#
Surprise PQs	-	+	✓	#
Rhetorical PQs	-	+	✓	#

☞ *Cusà* is conventionally associated with Speaker Ignorance

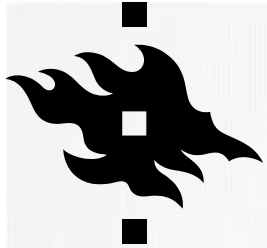


3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

3.3 The distribution of *chi* in declaratives

The particle *chi* can also be used in replies, preceded by one of the ‘emphatic’ particles (depending on the dialect: Piccitto & Tropea 1977-2002, Cruschina 2012: 190-192):

- *a* (unclear origin)
 - *ca* (homophonous with the declarative complementizer)
 - *nca* (unclear origin)
-
- with falling intonation, it conveys a confirmative reply
 - with high (‘incredulity’) intonation, it conveys a denial

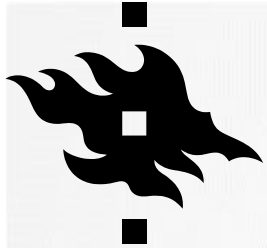


3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

3.3 The distribution of *chi* in declaratives

(29) A: *Maria avi na simana ca un nesci di dintra,*
Maria has one week that not go-out from inside
studia ùattu uri au jùarnu pirchí javi esami.
studies eight hours at-the day because has exams
'Mary hasn't gone out for a week, she's studying eight hours
a day because she has exams.'

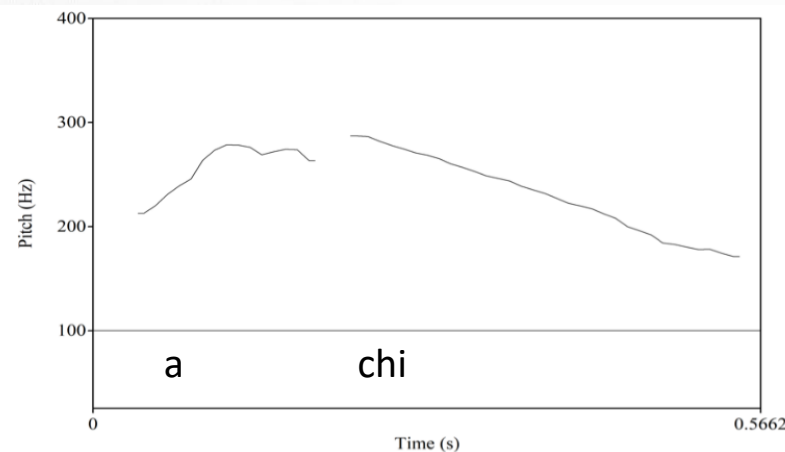
B: *A chi, veru, mi scurdavu nzina chi facci javi.*
PTC PTC true, REFL forgot.1SG even which face has
'Right, I even forgot her face.'



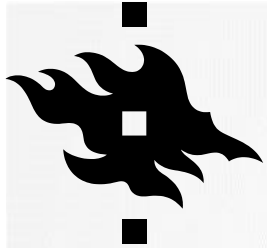
3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

3.3 The distribution of *chi* in declaratives

B: **A** *chi*, veru, mi scurdavu nzina chi facci javi.
PTC PTC true, REFL forgot.1SG even which face has
'Right, I even forgot her face.'



👉 with falling intonation,
it conveys a confirmative reply

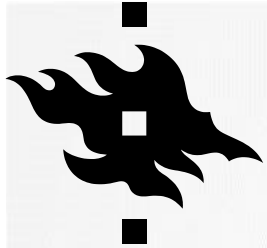


3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

3.3 The distribution of *chi* in declaratives

(30) A: *Maria avi na simana ca un nesci di dintra,*
Maria has one week that not go-out from inside
studia ùattu uri au jùarnu pirchí javi esami.
studies eight hours at-the day because has exams
'Mary hasn't gone out for a week, she's studying eight hours
a day because she has exams.'

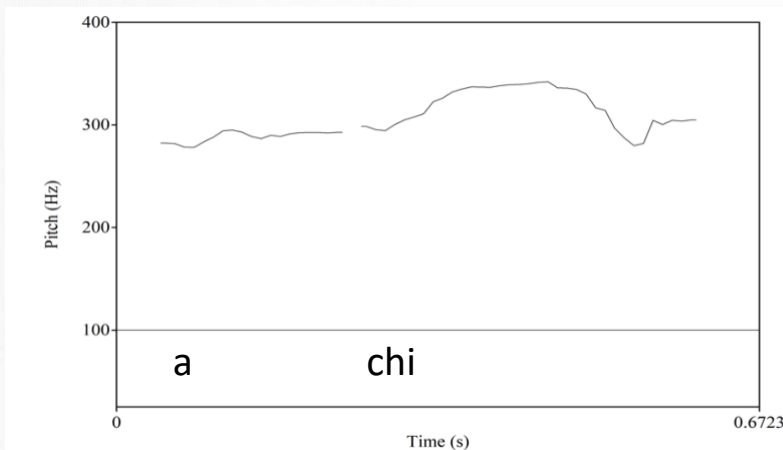
C: *A chi?! A vitti stamatina au mercatu.*
PTC PTC her=saw.1SG this morning at-the market
'No way! I saw her at the market this morning.'



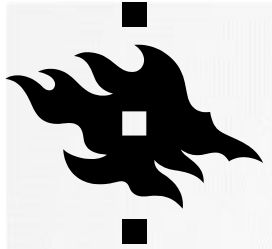
3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

3.3 The distribution of *chi* in declaratives

C: **A** *chi*?! A vitti stamatina au mercatu.
PTC PTC her=saw.1SG this morning at-the market
'No way! I saw her at the market this morning.'



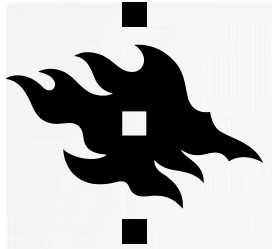
➡ with high ('incredulity') intonation, it conveys a denial



3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF *CHI* AND *CUSÀ*

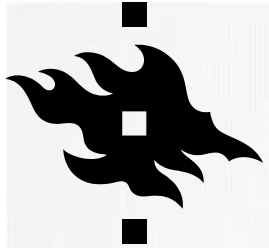
3.3 The distribution of *chi* in declaratives

- In polar questions, *chi* is conventionally associated with the Addressee (Competence)
- In declarative replies, *chi* is conventionally associated with the Speaker



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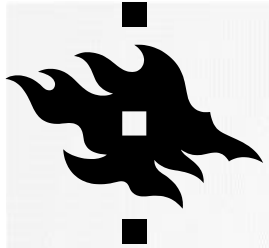
4. THE ANALYSIS

4.1 The proposal in a nutshell

- In a speech act, the **source** is the participant (if any) who becomes committed to the propositional content, or else the participant who is expected to become committed to it:
 - in assertions and replies, the source is the Speaker
 - in questions, the source is the Addressee

(Farkas 2020, (15); cf. also Speas & Tenny 2003)

- The lower particle *chi* is conventionally associated with competence of the source: the Speaker in declarative replies, the Addressee in questions.
- The higher particle *cusà* is always anchored to the Speaker (both in questions and in declaratives, where it has a dubitative meaning), and is conventionally associated with Speaker ignorance.

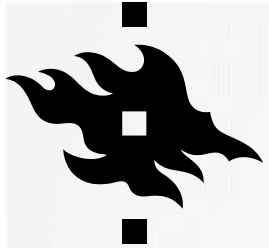


4. THE ANALYSIS

4.2 The inquisitive semantics framework

- Inquisitive semantics is a semantic framework based on a formal notion of meaning which, unlike the traditional truth-conditional notion, deals with both informative and inquisitive content.
 - unified analysis of statements and questions
- In inquisitive semantics, an utterance is intuitively seen as a **proposal to update** the information commonly established in a conversation **in one or more ways**.
 - Statements propose a single update
 - Questions propose two or more alternative updates: they are inquisitive, in that they invite a response from the addressee that establishes at least one of the alternative updates

(Ciardelli et al. 2019)

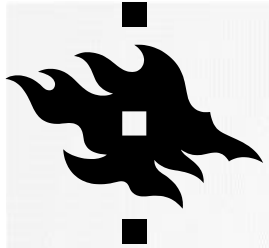


4. THE ANALYSIS

4.2 The inquisitive semantics framework

Some premises:

- Possible world semantics assumes a set W of possible states of the world (**possible worlds**)
- In conversation, utterances are interpreted against a **common ground** of information that is shared by all the conversational participants
- The **context set** comprises a subset of W that conform to all the common ground information
- A sentence S is **informative** relative to a given context if and only if it is true in some but not all the worlds of its context set (Stalnaker 1978)



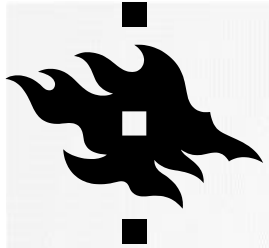
4. THE ANALYSIS

4.2 The inquisitive semantics framework

- In inquisitive semantics, both declarative and interrogative sentences denote **sets of alternatives**, where each alternative is a maximal set of worlds. Let's assume a context set containing four possible worlds: $\{w_1, w_2, w_3, w_4\}$.
- A declarative like (31) denotes a proposition containing just one alternative: the set of all possible worlds in which *Al invited Carl*, e.g. $\{w_1, w_2\}$.

(31) *Al invited Carl*

- ☞ This sentence is informative (if we assume that it excludes some worlds of the context set (i.e. w_3 and w_4) and non-inquisitive, since it contains only one alternative



4. THE ANALYSIS

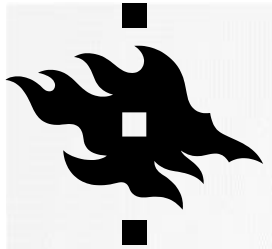
4.2 The inquisitive semantics framework

(31) *Al invited Carl*

- (31) can be turned into a non-informative and inquisitive proposition by adding on top of the sentence radical the non-informative closure operator (notated ?).
→ this operator adds to the unique alternative of (31) the complement alternative {w3, w4}, comprising those worlds which were not covered by (31).

(32) a. Did Al invite Carl? b. LF: [? [Al invited Carl]]

☞ Question (32) introduces in the context an open issue; the issue is resolved by selecting one of the two alternatives and discarding the other from the context set.



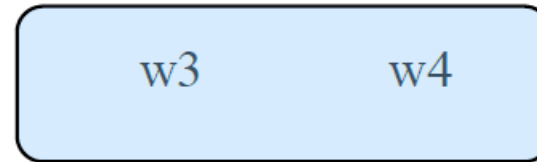
4. THE ANALYSIS

4.2 The inquisitive semantics framework

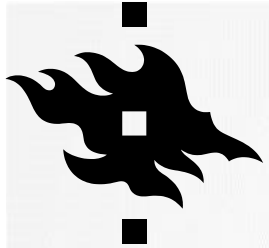


w3 w4

Al invited Carl



[? [Al invited Carl]]



4. THE ANALYSIS

4.2 The inquisitive semantics framework

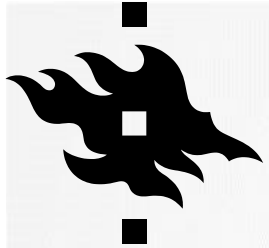
- Following Farkas & Roelofsen (2017), the PQ (32), though denoting an issue with two alternatives, **highlights only the alternative denoted by its sentence radical**, i.e. $\{w1, w2\}$.
- This alternative is anaphorically picked up by the responding particles: yes confirms it, thus restricting the context set to $\{w1, w2\}$, while no excludes it, and restricts the context set to $\{w3, w4\}$.

(32') a. Did Al invite Carl?

b. LF: [? [Al invited Carl]]

B: Yes $\{w1, w2\}$

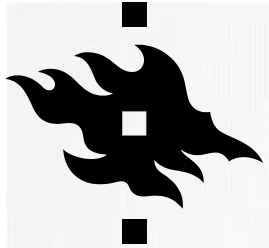
C: No $\{w3, w4\}$



4. THE ANALYSIS

4.2 The inquisitive semantics framework

- (33) **Canonical speech act:** Update the context with the most informative (relevant) clause that is supported by your epistemic state.
- If a speaker asserts an informative clause C , then C is supported by her epistemic state (Speaker Competence)
 - If a speaker asks a non-informative PQ $?C$, her epistemic state supports neither of the more informative clauses C and $\neg C$ (Speaker Ignorance)
 - The speaker tentatively assumes that the addressee can answer $?C$ by complying with (38) (Addressee Competence) – NB: but the speaker has no introspective access to the addressee's epistemic state.



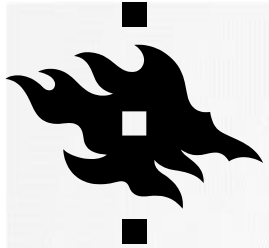
4. THE ANALYSIS

4.2 The inquisitive semantics framework

Non-canonical questions are not subject to (33):

when a speech act is not aimed at increasing the shared information, the participants are not constrained to utter the most informative epistemically supported sentence:

- they can ask a question whose answer is already known to them (as in *quiz questions*), and possibly also to the addressee (as in *surprise and rhetorical questions*),
- or they can ask a question without assuming that an answer is supported by the addressee's epistemic state (as in *quiz and engaging questions*).

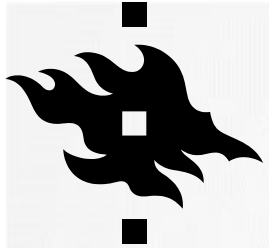


4. THE ANALYSIS

4.2 The inquisitive semantics framework

(Un)decidedness (Farkas 2003 et seq.)

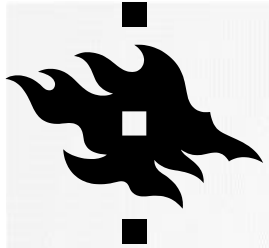
- (34) Given an information state I and a proposition P ,
- (i) an alternative A in P is positively decided in I iff I is a subset of A (i.e., all the worlds in I are A -worlds)
 - (ii) an alternative A in P is negatively decided in I iff I is disjoint from A (i.e., no world in I is an A -world)
 - (iii) an alternative A in P is decided iff A is either positively or negatively decided in I .
Otherwise, A is undecided in I .
 - (iv) A proposition P is resolved in I iff every alternative in P is decided in I .



4. THE ANALYSIS

4.3 The conventional implicature of *chi*

- ***Chi*** introduces the conventional implicature that the alternative highlighted by a PQ is decided (i.e., either positively or negatively) in the current epistemic state of the commitment anchor (the addressee in PQs).
 - The default assumption of addressee competence is strengthened to a non-cancellable implicature (in the sense of Potts 2005), which excludes *chi* from those PQs where addressee competence is not granted.



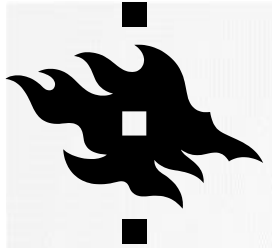
4. THE ANALYSIS

4.3 The conventional implicature of *chi*

- **The apparent optionality of *chi***

Context of informative asymmetry: passenger to a bus driver

- (35) ?? (Chi) va a chiazza ranni, st' autobus?
PTC goes to-the square big this bus
'Does this bus go to the main square?'



4. THE ANALYSIS

4.3 The conventional implicature of *chi*

What about declaratives?

- In declaratives, the commitment anchor is the speaker: by uttering a declarative sentence, the speaker publicly commits herself to the truth of its informative content (or more precisely, she commits herself to behaving as if this content were true).
- In asserted declaratives the conventional implicature introduced by *chi* would be redundant; in fact, *chi* is not possible.

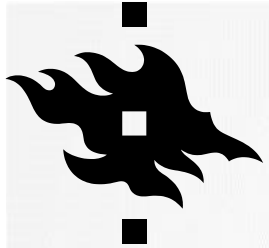


4. THE ANALYSIS

4.3 The conventional implicature of *chi*

Exception: declarative replies

- A *chi* can be used as a reply:
 - a) with a falling intonation, which conveys speaker commitment (Gunlogson 2003): the reply implicates that the speaker was already aware of the previously asserted content.
 - b) with a high intonation: ‘incredulity’ contour signalling lack of speaker commitment (Gunlogson 2003: 20–23). In this case, the reply conveys a denial.

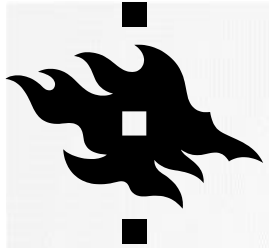


4. THE ANALYSIS

(29') A: 'Mary hasn't gone out for a week, she's studying eight hours a day because she has exams.'

B: **A** *chi*, *veru*, *mi* *scurdavu* *nzina* *chi* *facci* *javi*. ➞ with falling intonation,
PTC PTC true, REFL forgot.1SG even which face has it conveys a confirmative reply
'Right, I even forgot her face.'

(30') C: **A** *chi*?! *A* *vitti* *stamatina* *au* *mercato*. ➞ with high ('incredulity') intonation,
PTC PTC her=saw.1SG this morning at-the market it conveys a denial
'No way! I saw her at the market this morning.'

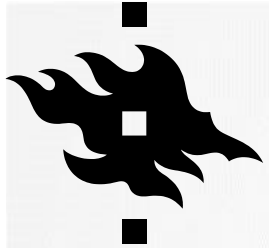


4. THE ANALYSIS

4.3 The conventional implicature of *chi*

Assumption: The reply *a chi* anaphorically picks up the unique alternative of the preceding declarative C (cf. Roelofsen & Farkas 2015: 378-379)

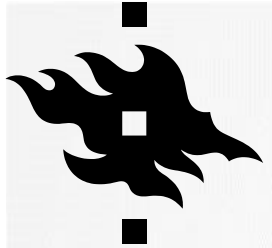
- *Chi* conveys that the highlighted alternative is decided in Speaker B/C's epistemic state:
 - a) Falling intonation conveys that B commits herself to highlighted alternative: The implicature conveyed by *chi* in (29B) is not redundant because B has not herself asserted the utterance.
 - b) The 'incredulity' intonation conveys lack of Speaker commitment: Speaker C refuses to commit to highlighted alternative (which implicates that this is negatively decided in C's epistemic state, it is not supported by it).



4. THE ANALYSIS

4.4 The conventional implicature of *cusà*

- ***Cusà*** in PQs introduces the conventional implicature that the speaker is not just ignorant about the highlighted alternative, but unable to decide it (positively or negatively), that is, unable to find out the true answer.
 - The particle is excluded from those PQs that are incompatible with Speaker Ignorance.
 - When the speaker is unable to find out the true answer to a PQ, she typically has recourse to the addressee's competence: this is why *cusà* naturally cooccurs with *chi*

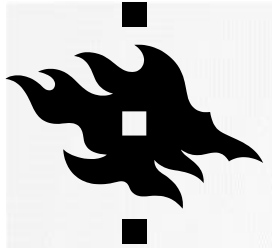


4. THE ANALYSIS

4.4 The conventional implicature of *cusà*

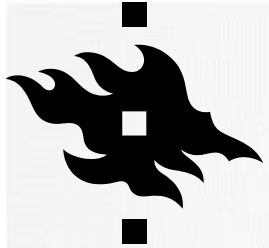
In declaratives:

- ***Cusà*** conveys the assumption that *p* cannot be decided in the Speaker's epistemic state: the Speaker does not commit to its truth, nor does she project the Addressee's committing to it. The *cusà* clause simply highlights *p* as a salient possibility (cf. the dubitative function).



Outline

1. The Sicilian particles *chi* and *cusà*
2. Default assumptions in canonical and non-canonical questions
3. The distribution of *chi* and *cusà*
4. The analysis: Ignorance and competence implicatures
5. Anchoring the particles
6. Conclusions

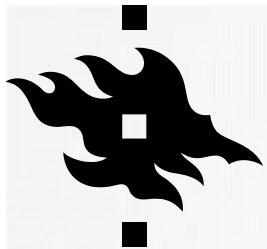


5. ANCHORING THE PARTICLES

Speech Act Projections, SAPs (Speas & Tenny 2003)

- **Cusà** is anchored to the speaker (both in declaratives and in questions).
- **Chi** is anchored to the addressee in questions, and to the speaker in declarative replies. This shifting of the role of (expected) commitment anchor is an instance of the general phenomenon of *interrogative flip* (Speas & Tenny 2003, Tenny 2006: see also Woods 2014).

- (35) a. Frankly, AI is unreliable. (The speaker is talking frankly)
- b. Frankly, is AI reliable? (The addressee is expected to answer frankly)



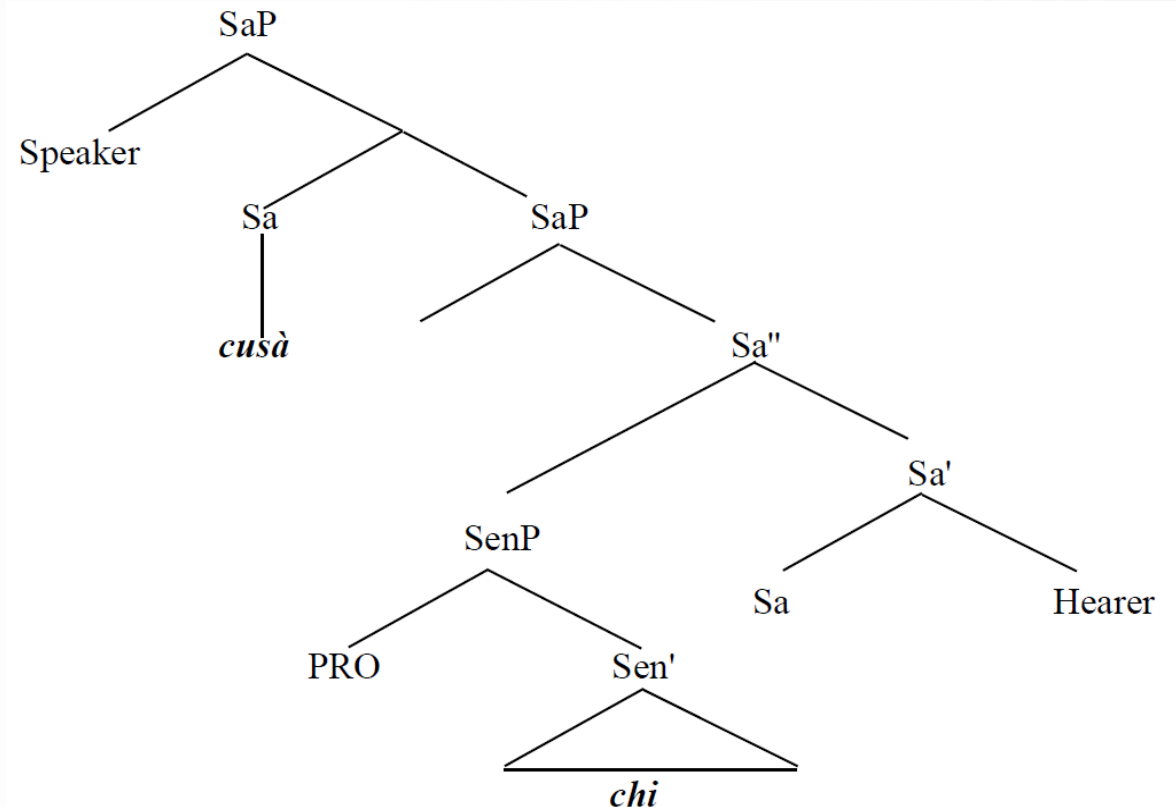
5. ANCHORING THE PARTICLES

- Speaker = agent of the speech act
- Addressee = goal
- Sentence Phrase = its content

PRO: the person whose attitude towards the propositional content is expressed (i.e. source)

- In **declaratives**, the speaker is the closest element that locally controls PRO and becomes the attitude holder.

(36)





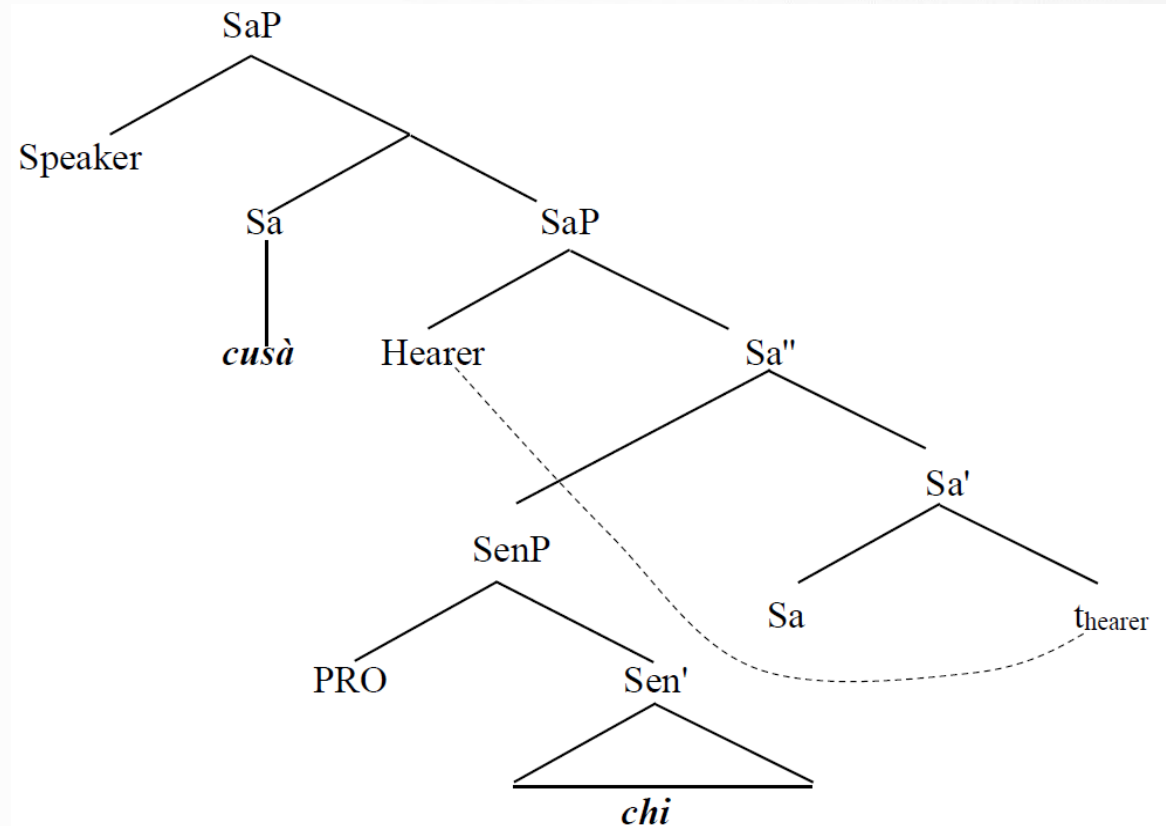
5. ANCHORING THE PARTICLES

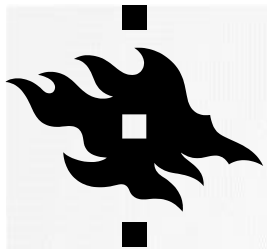
- Speaker = agent of the speech act
- Addressee = goal
- Sentence Phrase = its content

PRO: the person whose attitude towards the propositional content is expressed (i.e. source)

- In declaratives, the speaker is the closest element that locally controls PRO and becomes the attitude holder.
- In **interrogatives**, the addressee is syntactically promoted and becomes the closest element that controls PRO.

(37)

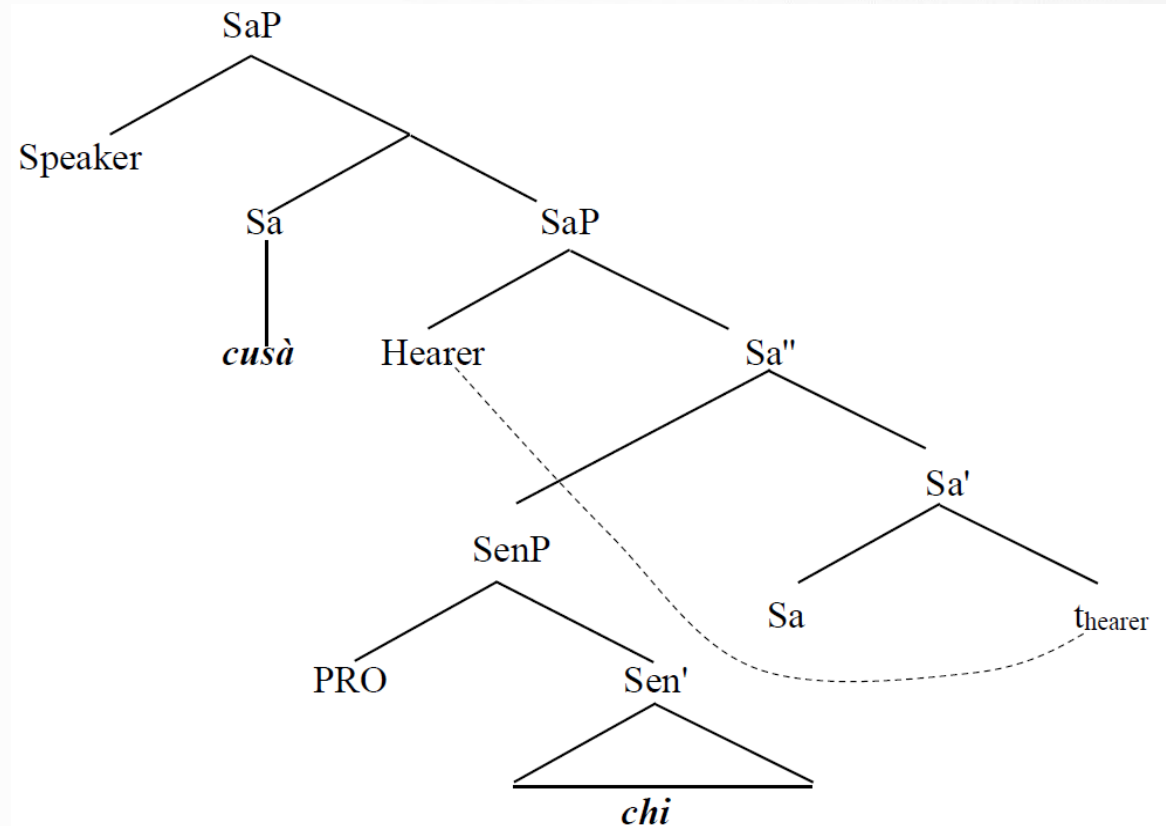


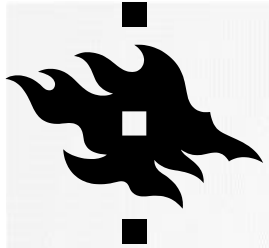


5. ANCHORING THE PARTICLES

(37)

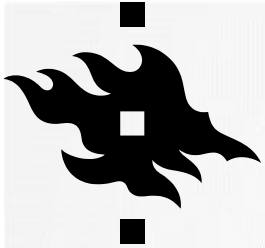
- **Cusà** is located in the highest SAP head, hosting the speaker in its Spec: it is anchored to the speaker both in declaratives and in interrogatives.
- **Chi** is contained the Sentence Phrase: it is anchored to the PRO attitude holder, and it is subject to the interrogative flip.
 - *cusà* always precedes *chi*
 - the two particles are not found in embedded clauses





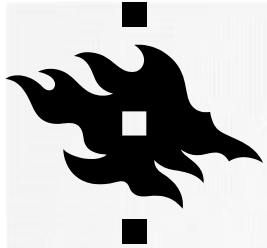
6. CONCLUSIONS

- The assumption that declaratives and questions have the same denotational type allows for a unified approach to all the uses of the Sicilian particles.
- The default assumptions associated with (non-)canonical speech acts can be strengthened to conventional implicatures grammatically associated to discourse particles.
- The syntactic distribution of the two Sicilian particles supports the hypothesis of “speech act projections” in the left periphery of main clauses, dedicated to conventional non-at-issue meanings related to conversation management.



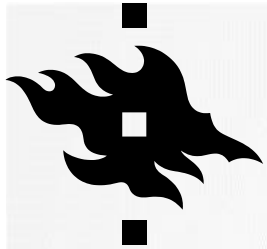
Thank you!

(Cusà) (chi) aviti dumanni?
Do you have questions?



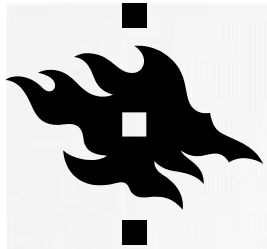
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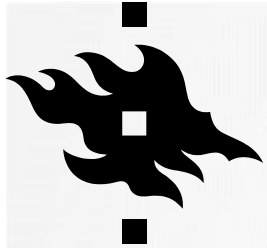
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