

## Italian *poi* as a trigger of expressive presupposition

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**Abstract.** This paper proposes an analysis of the discourse particle (DiP) *poi* in the Italian as spoken in Vallecamonica, in the north of the country. The data discussed here show that the informal characterizations provided in the literature (e.g., Cognola & Cruschina 2021) are insufficient to capture the meanings of *poi* described in the paper. The import of the particle is, in fact, one of uncontroversiality and factuality, two concepts related to the notion of common ground management (Krifka 2008). Following Grosz (2020), I propose an analysis in terms of expressive presupposition to capture (i) the presuppositional content activated by *poi* and (ii) the doxastic dimension of the particle, which only relates to the speaker's beliefs, rather than to the actual common ground.

**Keywords.** discourse particles; presuppositions; expressives; semantics

**1. Introduction.** This paper proposes an analysis of the discourse particle (DiP) *poi* in the Italian as spoken in Vallecamonica, in the north of the country. In §2, I introduce some general theoretical issues concerning the investigation of DiPs; §3 provides an overview of the previous literature about *poi* in Italian; §4 is dedicated to the discussion of novel data and the analysis of *poi* as a trigger of expressive presuppositions. §5 concludes the paper.

**2. Issues with discourse particles.** The discussion of the properties of DiPs raises various issues that need to be addressed in any work on the topic. This section discusses some general preliminary problems before presenting an overview of the different theoretical approaches to DiPs.

2.1. PRELIMINARY ISSUES. The investigation of discourse particles (in the wider sense) began with descriptive works on German (e.g., Weydt 1969, Kriwonossow 1977). More recent studies approach the topic from a cross-linguistic perspective (e.g., Csirmaz & Slade 2020 for Hungarian, Rinas 2006 for German, Holton, Mackridge, & Philippaki-Warbuton 1997 for Greek, Li 2006 for Chinese). Finally, numerous works propose more formal analyses that aim to capture the core semantic values of DiPs and their relations with other modules of grammar. The rest of the section is devoted to this last set of studies, which pursue the same goals as the present work.

A fundamental issue addressed by virtually every work on DiPs is terminological since several labels have been associated with these items. The most commonly used mimic the German *Modalpartikeln* 'Modal Particles.' However, "modality" here differs from the traditional function of modeling possible worlds. When discussing DiPs, *modality* is described in Thurmair (1989: 3) as the property of DiPs to "making a non-truth-conditional contribution" to the proposition. To avoid confusion, I follow Grosz (2020), referring to these elements as "discourse particles."

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A second common goal is defining the exact role of DiPs in the utterance in order to distinguish them from other elements with similar functions usually labeled “discourse markers” (DM), and also related to some type of discourse management (Kehler 2011). Conversely, DiPs in the narrow sense employed here are defined by their relationship with the speaker’s epistemic values and beliefs. DiPs are characterized by their ability to convey “the speaker’s epistemic attitude towards the propositional content of an utterance”; or to express “speaker’s assumptions about the epistemic states of his or her interlocutors concerning a particular proposition” (Zimmermann 2011: 2013).

According to Shiffrin (1987: 31), DMs are “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk”. In other words, their main role is discourse management, rather than one related to the extra-linguistic context (see also Sansò 2020 for Italian).

The controversy over the blurred line separating DiPs and DMs cannot be further addressed here, and I adopt the useful distinction provided by Degand, Cornillie & Pietrandrea (2013) who propose that the two groups differ in their scope relations. Consider (1):

- (1) a. *Poi magari non lo vuole nemmeno*  
 poi maybe NEG CL.3SG.M want.3SG.PRS even  
 ‘(S)he doesn’t even want it.’  
 b. *Non lo vuole poi*  
 NEG CL.3SG.M want.3SG.PRS poi  
 ‘(S)he doesn’t even want it, obviously!’

In (1a), *poi* ‘then’ functions as a DM since it connects two parts of the text. It is only felicitous in a context in which one of the participants in the conversation had talked about a possible (future) scenario where a third individual “want it”, which would have some implications. The role of the *poi*-proposition in (1a) is to communicate that the preceding discourse may be dismissed since the individual might, in the end, not “want it” anyway. Conversely, *poi* in (1b) is a DiP signaling that the proposition is uncontroversial according to the speaker, regardless of the discourse context in which (1b) is uttered. In other words, the two classes share an indexical function since they connect the modified proposition to some extra-propositional element. However, they operate on different levels: DiPs have scope over propositions or speech acts; DMs have scope over non-propositional discourse elements.

The last of the main preliminary issues for the investigation of DiPs concerns their categorial status. DiPs are argued to form a class of “invariable natural language expression” that “help to organize a discourse by conveying information concerning epistemic states” of the participants to a conversation concerning “the descriptive or propositional content of an utterance.” (Zimmermann 2011: 2012). The particles discussed here possess these features, together with a general function of common ground management (in the sense of Krifka 2008).

While not uncontroversial, the properties presented in this section shape the basic characterization of DiPs utilized in this paper. The reader is referred to Bayer & Struckmeier (2016) for a discussion of the status of the research on DiPs in syntax and semantics.

2.2. THEORETICAL ISSUES. DiPs pose an additional theoretical challenge concerning how they contribute to the meaning of their host structure. For an overview of the approaches proposed in the literature that cannot be included in this paper, the reader is referred to Grosz (2020, §5).

For the time being, I only discuss the presuppositional line of inquiry that I adopt to describe and discuss *poi* in Italian. From a theoretical standpoint, the main advantage of this approach

comes from the shift in perspective from considering the distribution of DiPs as directly connected to the host-proposition to an account considering a by-product of their core meaning. DiPs, in fact, act as truth-conditionally vacuous triggers of presupposition (Egg & Zimmermann 2012). In particular, Grosz (2020) suggests that such a presupposition is an “expressive presupposition,” containing indexical elements related to the speaker, the hearer, and the utterance context (see Sauerland 2007, Schlenker 2007). I describe this approach in §4.3, where I introduce the analysis of *poi* in Lombard Italian.

Further evidence for a presuppositional treatment of DiPs comes from Coniglio (2006), who notices that DiPs shift orientation in embedded contexts. The presence of the indexical elements encoded in the DiP can capture the fact that the DiP itself is anchored to the speaker, hearer, and context it is uttered in, not to the “actual” speaker in (2).

- (2) Seine Mutter machte mir daraufhin noch viele Vorwürfe, dass ich ja selbst Schuld sei, [...] his mother made me after that still many reproaches that I JA myself at.fault were.  
 ‘After that, his mother made many accusations (saying) that after all I myself was [JA] to blame.’ (Grosz 2020: 29)

According to Grosz’s description, the mother is the shifted speaker who believes that the shifted addressee (the actual speaker) was to blame. *Ja* expresses uncontroversiality, a value only believed by the mother. In (2), *ja* indeed refers to the embedded proposition, not to the whole utterance, much like the behavior of other adverbial propositional modifiers such as *too* or *again*, for which no connection with the syntactic force of the utterance is required.

The rest of the paper discusses the Italian adverb *poi* ‘afterward’ in its particle use, starting with an overview of the previous treatments proposed in the literature on Italian.

**3. Overview of Italian.** In its adverbial use, Italian *poi* ‘afterward’ generally expresses temporal ordering. In some cases, the first event is given in the utterance (3a). In contrast, in (3b), *poi* refers to a previous conversational event (cf. Cardinaletti 2011) or a salient referent in the context. In the latter case, it is better interpreted as ‘in the end’ in English. *Poi* can also be used as DM with an additive value or a contrastive, adversative, or dismissalal meaning (3c). A fourth use as a DiP is the topic of this paper which discusses, in particular, the meanings exemplified by (3d):

- (3) a. Hanno salutato gli ospiti poi sono andati a letto.  
 have.3PL.PRS greet.PRT the guests poi be.3PL.PRS go.3PL.PRT to bed  
 ‘They greeted the guests, then they went to bed.’  
 b. Hanno poi comprato la macchina?  
 have.3PL.PRS poi buy.PRT the car  
 ‘Did they ended up buying the car?’  
 c. Io chiamerei un taxi, voi poi fate come volete.  
 I call.COND a taxi you.PL poi do.2PL.PRS how want.2PL.PRS  
 ‘I would recommend calling a cab, however/but it’s up to you all.’  
 d. Avranno (*poi*)<sup>1</sup> mangiato qui vicino (*poi*).<sup>2</sup>  
 have.3PL.FUT poi eat.PRT there close poi  
 ‘They must have eaten nearby [nothing special<sup>1</sup>/where else?!<sup>2</sup>].’

Before describing the specific import of *poi* as a DiP in my account and others in the literature, I present some general considerations that must be taken into account when discussing Italian data.

3.1. ISSUES WITH STANDARD ITALIAN. The linguistic landscape of the Italian peninsula is characterized by numerous Romance languages and dialects exhibiting significant micro-variation, even within the same linguistic community. The variety of Italian spoken in different areas is affected by this substratum, and numerous sociolinguistic studies point that “Italian” is a useful but insufficient label for such a complex situation (Cerruti & Regis 2014; Del Negro & Vietti, 2011). In this paper, I adopt the tripartite distinction proposed in (Berruto 2012), consisting of: “Standard”; “Neo-Standard,”; and “Regional” Italian.

What is referred to as “standard” Italian is, *ipso facto*, an artificial construction referring to an abstract concept (Berruto 2012) based on archaic literary models (see De Mauro 2011 [1963]). The grammatical distance between a prestigious standard and the language spoken in the country motivated the description of the variety baptized “neo-standard” Italian (Berruto 2012). This terminology identifies the language spoken in newscasts, in educational contexts, on official occasions, and, more generally, as a *lingua franca*. Finally, the discussion of pragmatically marked items like DiPs cannot disregard the concept of “regional Italian” (Loporcaro 2010). This label identifies sub-standard dialects affected by the local varieties spoken in a specific area. To the best of my knowledge, the previous literature on DiPs in Italian does not provide any distinctions based on Italian varieties typology. However, it is crucial to specify which “Italian” a study deals with considering, for instance, that DiPs are attested in Northern Italian Dialects, but not in Central and Southern varieties. It is thus not expected for the readings and judgments introduced here to hold for all Italian speakers. From now on, the term “Italian” identifies the neo-standard variety, and “Lombard Italian” the regional Italian spoken in Vallecronica.

3.2. PREVIOUS ACCOUNTS FOR *POI*. The literature I discuss in this section refers to “Italian” without additional characterization. The data mainly comes from corpora, and I considered it to belong to the “Neo-Standard” group.

3.2.1. CATEGORIZATION OF *POI*. In their extensive overview, Cognola & Cruschina (2021: 89) identify three possible interpretations for *poi*: (i) “A connective, expressing a relationship between two linguistic items at (the) inter-sentential level and it specifies how the event should be situated and establish logical relations between events; (ii) A discourse marker, i.e., an element with a discourse managing function” (see also Schiffrin 1987, Sansò 2020); and (iii) a modal particle [...]. i.e., an element [...] with the purely pragmatic function of expressing the speaker’s attitude toward the utterance’s content.” Only the last use is relevant for this paper. All the examples discussed here are interpreted as DiP by the relevant authors. The reader is referred to Cognola & Cruschina (2021) for additional examples, description, and syntactic analysis of the uses of *poi* as an adverb and a discourse marker.

To the best of my knowledge, Coniglio (2006) presents the first systematic categorization of (certain uses of) *poi* as a DiP. Central to this analysis are some of the categorial features identified for *modalpartikeln* in German and shared by *poi*. In particular, it is shown that *poi* cannot be: (i) fronted; (ii) coordinated; (iii) negated; (iv) questioned; or (v) isolated.

Regarding its meaning, Coniglio (2008: 111) describes *poi* as signaling “that the speaker is not able to find an answer, nor is the hearer, according to the speaker’s assumptions” (4a), or expressing “the speaker’s concern or interest with respect to the information being asked for” mitigating the assertion (4b).

- (4) a. Chi avrà *poi* telefonato?  
 who have.3SG.FUT *poi* call.PRT  
 ‘I wonder who could have called.’  
 b. Non è *poi* così male!  
 NEG be.3SG.PRS *poi* so bad  
 ‘It’s not that bad after all!’ (Coniglio 2008: 34, 37)

A note about (4): the characteristics of the two structures make a discussion of their properties particularly challenging. While I consider them perfectly grammatical, I argue that in (4a), the inability to find an answer is implied by the illocutionary force of the question. The modal use of the future form “mitigate(s) the assertion” by limiting the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the proposition. To isolate the import of *poi*, the parallel structures in (5) are more appropriate.

- (5) a. #Chi ha *poi* telefonato?  
 who have.3SG.PST *poi* call.PRT  
 ‘I wonder who called?’  
 b. Chi avrà telefonato?  
 who have.3SG.FUT call.PRT  
 ‘I wonder who could have called.’

The sentence in (5a) is incompatible with the intended meaning in Italian, since *poi* could only be interpreted as indicating a temporal relation. On the other hand, the utterance in (5b) conveys the meaning proposed in Coniglio (2008) regardless the presence or absence of *poi*.

The data in (4b) are also problematic since, albeit it cannot be considered a prototypical idiom, it shares many features of idiomatic expressions (Portner 2005). This is shown in (6a), which is ungrammatical because lacking negation. As for (4a), the mitigation of the assertion is conveyed by *così* ‘so/too/that’ (6b). Finally, the counter-expectational value described in Coniglio (2008) for (4b) is due to the presence of negation rather than by *poi* alone.

- (6) a. \*È *poi* così male!  
 be.3SG.PRS *poi* so bad  
 ‘It’s not that bad after all!’  
 b. Non è così male!  
 NEG be.3SG.PRS so bad  
 ‘It’s not that/too bad!’

A more precise characterization identifying the exact role of *poi* must be provided in order to capture a larger set of data. The proposal described in the following section is able to provide a useful overview of the uses in standard Italian.

3.2.2. DISCOURSE PARTICLE READINGS FOR *POI* AND PRESUPPOSITION. Cognola & Cruschina (2021) provide, at present, the most up-to-date discussion of the interpretational properties of *poi*. When discussing its reading as a DiP, they focus on two key concepts: (i) Counter-expectation; and (ii) Mirativity. *Mirativity* has been first identified as the grammatical category marking the unpreparedness of the speaker’s mind over (the content of) a proposition (DeLancey 1997). *Counter-expectation* is presupposed in a mirative structure. It signals a mismatch between the expectation of at least one participant of the conversation and the actual state of affairs. These two concepts are common to the use of *poi* in Lombard Italian described below.

Cognola & Cruschina (2021) base their discussion of the properties of DiP (*Modal* in their definition) on examples of negative sentences like the ones in (7).

- (7) a. Non siamo *poi* così lontani dalla verità.  
 NEG be.1PL.PRS *poi* so far from-the truth  
 ‘We are not so far from the truth, after all.’  
 b. Non è *poi* un gran labirinto.  
 NEG be.1PL.PRS *poi* a big maze  
 ‘It is not a big labyrinth.’ (adapted from Cognola & Cruschina 2021: 29a, 29e)

As for Coniglio’s data discussed above, I do not consider (7a) appropriate for the analysis of the meaning of *poi*. I include it anyway since it is the one chosen by the authors to be tested in a variety of contexts. (7a), in fact, is another case of *proto*-idiomatic expression. The sentence without negation is, at best, borderline in combination with both *poi* and *così* (8).

- (8) \*/?? Siamo *poi* così lontani dalla verità.  
 be.1PL.PRS *poi* so far from-the truth  
 ‘We are not so far from the truth, after all.’

Setting these issues aside, the structures in (7) convey both core values of *poi*. In both cases, the counter-expectationality is captured by the proposed analysis of *poi* as an element negating a presupposition. At a previous time, the speaker (or the addressee, according to the speaker) believes the presupposition. At the utterance time, they imply its negation using *poi* (9):

- (9) a.  $p_{[poi]}$  = PRESUPPOSITION: [we are far from the truth]  
 ASSERTION: [we are not far from the truth]  
 b.  $p_{[poi]}$  = PRESUPPOSITION: [it is a big labyrinth]  
 ASSERTION: [*it is not a big labyrinth*] (Adapted from Cognola & Cruschina 2021: 106)

By using *poi*, the speaker conveys their surprise over the mismatch of their previous beliefs and the actual state of affairs. In (7), the negation of presupposition is explicit. I argue that, at least for Lombard Italian, both values are a by-product of the mark of the *poi*-proposition as, initially, uncontroversial and factual. The literature of *poi* agrees that its distribution is limited to certain sentence types which, I argue, is another consequence of its core semantic values.

**4. *Poi* in Lombard Italian.** The data discussed in this section shows that the role of *poi* in Lombard Italian is to signal that the at-issue content of the *poi*-proposition is initially believed to be *uncontroversial* by the speaker. At the utterance time, there is evidence in the context that contradicts this belief: *poi* signals the speaker’s surprise over such a discrepancy. However, the proposition is also marked as *factual*, judgment that does not change, regardless the utterance context.

4.1. UNCONTROVERSIALITY AND FACTUALITY. In (10), *poi* indicates that a proposition *p* is initially marked as uncontroversial, and factual. Both concepts are not precisely defined in the literature (see Zimmermann 2011, *i.a.*). For our purposes, *p* is considered uncontroversial when the speaker believes that  $\neg p$  should not be under consideration in the context (Grosz 2020). Marking *p* as factual means that it can be verified “on the spot” (Gutzmann 2015) proposition.

The beliefs of the speaker do not match the actual state of affairs: consider (12). Both structures are a possible answers to the question “where does her daughter work?”.

- (10) a. Sua figlia lavora a Breno.  
 his/her daughter work.3SG.PRS in Breno  
 ‘Her daughter works in Breno.’  
 b. Sua figlia lavora a Breno *poi*!  
 his/her daughter work.3SG.PRS in Breno *poi*  
 ‘Her daughter works in Breno (, and you should know that!).’

As the translations suggest, the difference in meaning between (10a) and (10b) regards the beliefs of the speaker about the proposition in relation to the CG. In (10b), the speaker conveys at a non-truth-conditional level, i.e., as a presupposition, that (i) the content of the proposition is believed to be uncontroversial, and (ii) the addressee is actively considering  $\neg p$ . In the context of (10), the presence of the question presupposes that the addressee is not aware of  $p$  and is thus considering  $\neg p$ , contrary to the speaker’s beliefs.

Importantly, to be (initially) considered uncontroversial is not necessarily a single proposition, but possibly a relation between propositions. This is the case under scrutiny in (11):

- (11) ADDRESSEE: Perché sua figlia mangia là tutti i giorni?  
 why his/her daughter eat.3SG.PRS there every the days  
 ‘Why does her daughter eat there every day?’  
 SPEAKER: Perché lavora a Breno *poi*  
 because work.3SG.PRS in Breno *poi*  
 ‘Because she works in Breno (, it’s the only explanation, no?!).’

In (11), the speaker considers not only  $p$  uncontroversial, but also the inference ( $p \rightarrow x$ ), i.e., it is because she works in Breno that she always has lunch in a specific place nearby. In this case, there is no evidence for the speaker to believe that the addressee is considering  $\neg p$ . The context merely suggests that the addressee is considering  $\neg(p \rightarrow x)$  – e.g., *there are many other reasons for her to be eating there*. This is clearly visible in (12), where the speaker’s question suggests that they do not consider  $p$  to be uncontroversial. Once established that  $p$  is accepted by the speaker, then the inference alone is marked as uncontroversial and factual, and *poi* be licensed:

- (12) A: Sai che sua figlia lavora a Breno?  
 know.2SG.PRS that his/her daughter work.3SG.PRS in Breno  
 ‘Do you know that her daughter works in Breno?’  
 B: Sì, lo so  
 Yes CL.3SG know.1SG.PRS  
 ‘Yes, I know that.’  
 A: Eh allora! È per quello che mangia lì *poi*  
 eh then be.3SG.PRS for that that eat.3SG.PRS there *poi*  
 ‘Well, that’s why she eats there! (how can you not see it?!).’

4.1.1. CONVERSATIONAL PROGRESSION. In the conversational context, *poi* has a role of “common ground management”, the dimension responsible for encoding “information about the manifest communicative interests and goals of the participants.” (Krifka 2008: 246). In other words, *poi* refers to how the common ground “should develop” according to the speaker, rather than the actual common ground. The speaker considers the modified proposition factual, i.e., its veridicality should be immediately verified by the addressee who needs to update *their* beliefs. A conversation including an instance of *poi*-proposition proceeds as follows (13):

- (13) T-1 the speaker believes  $p$  (or  $(p \rightarrow x)$ ) is uncontroversial.  
 T0 the speaker believes that the addressee is considering  $\neg p$  (presupposition for  $poi$ ).  
 T1 the  $po$ -proposition is uttered, and the addressee can:
- i. add the at-issue content of  $p$  to CG and accepts  $po-p$  (both  $p$  or  $(p \rightarrow x)$ ):  
*Oh, I didn't know/remember that his daughter works in Breno, you are right!*  
*I had not thought about that, it makes sense!*
  - ii. reject  $p$ :  
*No she doesn't, she started a new job!*
  - iii. reject the inference  $(p \rightarrow x)$ , not  $p$  per se:  
*I know she works in Breno, but Bienno is only 5 minutes away.*  
*She could eat there.*

In (13) the presupposition in T0 licenses  $poi$ . At this point, the proposition is no longer considered uncontroversial by the speaker (as it was in T-1). By using  $poi$  the speaker conveys their surprise over the mismatch between their beliefs and the one of the speaker. The sentence is put “up to further negotiation” (Abraham 2012), as common for DiPs. This captures the notion on “mitigated” in Coniglio’s (2006) terms. T1 shows that the proposition or the presupposition doesn’t need to be true in the actual world, but it must only be part of the speaker’s beliefs.

4.1.2. INTERROGATIVE STRUCTURES.  $Poi$  is also licensed in  $wh$ -questions, which categorically entail the presence of an existential component since they denote a set of propositions consisting in their focus semantic values (Cable 2007). The latter is a set of alternatives among which the speaker chooses the one they deem correct (Rooth 1992). The use of  $poi$  in interrogative contexts indicates that there exists a single proposition  $p$  that must be true in the context. However, the speaker knows that  $p$  is absent, or not active, in CG. The speaker cannot consider  $\neg p$ , since it considers the presupposed proposition uncontroversial, but also *non-factual*. It is not necessary for the speaker to believe that the addressee is considering  $\neg p$ . In this case, the sole belief assumed to be shared is the surprise over the fact that  $poi$  is not available. The question is biased in its alternatives, and it expresses the inability to find an answer mentioned in Coniglio (2006).

Let us assume that in (14), at T-1, the speaker is positive that *Carla* works in Breno. They subsequently learn that she eats every day in a town 20 miles away. This makes it impossible for the speaker’s belief to be accurate, despite being still considered technically uncontroversial.

- (14) Dove lavora  $poi$  la Carla?  
 where work.3SG.PRS  $poi$  the Carla  
 ‘Where does Carla work? (I was sure in Breno, but it clearly cannot be the case!).’

In (14), the  $wh$ -element activates a set of alternatives evaluated by the speaker. By using  $poi$ , one is selected as the most likely, but at the same time, it is eliminated by considering the information in the context. In other words, as mentioned above, by using  $poi$  the speaker produces an interrogative biased in the set of alternatives it activates. In certain cases, the question is biased to the point of being rhetorical, i.e., it is not expected that the addressee can provide an answer.

This characterization can explain why  $poi$  is unfelicitous in polar questions. These interrogatives only activate two alternatives: eliminating one of them makes the question redundant.

4.2. CONTRASTIVE READING. In certain contexts,  $poi$  in Lombard Italian, signals the mismatch between the speaker’s and the addressee’s beliefs concerning the uncontroversiality of the rejection of a proposition  $p$  asserted or assumed to be believed by the addressee. Consider (15):



- (15) A. Quei fiori sono orrendi!  
 those flowers be.3PL.PRS horrendous  
 ‘Those flowers are horrible!’  
 B. Ma cosa dici?! sono bellissimi *poi*!  
 but what say.2SG.PRS be.3PL.PRS beautiful *poi*  
 ‘what are you talking about? they are beautiful!’

In (15) the proposition  $q$  ‘the flowers are horrible’ is in opposition to the proposition  $p$  ‘the flowers are beautiful’ and, in the speaker’s egotistic view of the world,  $p$  is factual. Using *poi*, rather than conveying  $p$  the speaker activates the contrastive value of the uncontroversiality of  $\neg q$ .

The most common context licensing this reading for *poi*, is one in which the negated proposition is only assumed to be believed by the addressee based on clues in the context (16):

- (16) CONTEXT: [The speaker believes that the addressee thinks they did not go to a party since the speaker’s ex-partner is there.]  
 SPEAKER: Sapevo che poteva esserci, ma  
 know.1SG.IMP that can.3SG.IMP be=there.3SG but  
 ci sono *poi* andato lo stesso  
 CL.LOC be.1SG.PRS *poi* go.1SG.PST CL.3SG same  
 ‘I knew she might have been there, but (of course) I went anyway!’

Another prototypical example of this contrastive use is the one in (17), where an inference ( $p \rightarrow x$ ) is assumed to be believed by the addressee.

- (17) CONTEXT: [the addressee and the speaker are talking about the addressee’s son.]  
 ADDRESSEE: Basta! lo manderò alla scuola militare!  
 enough CL.3SG send.FUT to=the school military  
 ‘Enough, I’ll send him to boarding school!’  
 SPEAKER: Ha *poi* bevuto una birra  
 have.3SG.PRS *poi* drink.PRT a beer  
 ‘He just drank a beer! (nothing too serious).’

The speaker believes that the addressee considers the event described by  $p$  to warrant sending their son to military school. The speaker rejects this inference while marking  $p$  as uncontroversial since they believe that  $p$  refers to the only event that could trigger the addressee’s utterance in the speaker’s mind. Once again, *poi* is licensed by the beliefs of the speaker, regardless the veridicity of, in this case, ( $p \rightarrow q$ ). Considering “his son deserves being sent to military school”  $q$ , it seems that the role of *poi* can be reduced to the sole rejection of a proposition. Crucially, however, in this example, and I suspect in most of the felicitous contexts for *poi*, the DiP introduces a proposition  $p$  that entertains an inferential relation with  $q$ . For this reason, the analysis discusses such an inference.

4.2.1. CONVERSATIONAL PROGRESSION. The conversational context for the reading conveyed by this second instance of *poi* is worth discussing (18).

- (18)  $\tau$ -1 The speaker believes  $\neg p$  is uncontroversial, and so is  $\neg(p \rightarrow q)$ .  
 $\tau$ 0 The speaker believes that the addressee is considering  $p$  (or ( $p \rightarrow q$ )) – *poi* presupposition.

τ1 The *poi*-proposition is uttered, and the addressee can:

- i. Accept  $\neg p$  or  $\neg(p \rightarrow q)$ :  
*I'm glad you went anyway!*  
*You're right, I was just upset.*
- ii. Correct the speaker:  $\neg p$  or  $\neg(p \rightarrow q)$  were not being considered:  
*I didn't doubt you would have gone to the party anyway.*  
*Well, he also took my car to go to a party without permission!*
- iii. Reject  $\neg p$  or  $\neg(p \rightarrow q)$ :  
*Sorry, but you are always so sensitive about it.*  
*JUST a beer? He is 13! I will send him there!*

4.2.2. INTERROGATIVE STRUCTURES. With the contrastive reading, the prototypical example is a (wh-)question indicating that the speaker believes that there must exist a proposition  $p$  they are unaware of, which is appropriate for the utterance context. Consider (19), uttered in the same context as (17). The speaker activates an inference like  $\exists x|x \rightarrow q$ , where  $q$  indicates the believe of the addressee *my son deserves being sent to military school*, and  $x$  a proposition referring to an event warrant such a punishment.

(19) Cosa ha fatto poi tuo figlio?  
 what have.3SG.PRS do.PRT poi your son  
 ‘What did your son do? (it must be serious!).’

In (19), the *wh*-question introduces a threshold signaling the “separation” of two sets of alternatives. One including the ones judged serious enough to function as premise for the inference, and one containing the ones not reaching such a threshold. From a theoretical point of view, a characterization based on a ranking of alternatives creates all sorts of problems. However, the discussion of these properties must be left to future studies.

4.3. *POI* AS A TRIGGER OF EXPRESSIVE PRESUPPOSITION. The description of *poi* in this section shows that the two concepts of uncontroversiality and factuality, albeit similar, must be kept separated. The presence of both, can capture the presupposition(s) activated by *poi* while also licensing the presence of the factual component in any context. The two presuppositions capturing the two values are the minimal requirements for *poi* to be felicitous.

The analysis I propose adopts Grosz’s (2020) hypothesis of DiP as triggers of “expressive presupposition” (see Sauerland 2007; Schlenker 2007). This type of presupposition contains three indexical elements  $g$ , which refer to the speaker ( $s0$ ), the addressee ( $a0$ ), and the situation in the utterance context ( $w0$ ). Since the speaker is the only authority regarding their beliefs on both the addressee and the context (Potts 2015), the presupposition is self-verifying. The data from Lombard Italian shows that this a property of *poi* is to doxastically modify a preposition, based on the beliefs of the speaker. It is only possible, for the addressee to cancel the uncontroversiality value, but not the factual one. However, the speaker can maintain that the presuppositions are still verified in their beliefs over the common ground. This is a property strictly related to the concept of common ground management as described in Krifka (2008).

Let us consider Grosz’s (2020) formalization of the presupposition introduced by *ja* in (20):

(20)  $\llbracket ja \rrbracket^g = \lambda p_{\langle s,t \rangle}: g(s0)$  believes that  $g(a0)$  does not actively considers the possibility of  $\neg p$  in  $g(w0) \cdot p$   
 where “ $x$  actively considers the possibility of  $\phi$ ” means:  $x$  believes that  $\phi$  or  $x$  tries to resolve the question of whether  $\phi$  or  $\neg\phi$  (Grosz, 2020: 28)

German *ja* signals that a proposition is accepted as true by all the participants of the conversation; in Clark's (1992) terms, it is *factual*. The definition in (20) entails that the proposition is also marked as *uncontroversial*. As discussed earlier, *poi*-propositions are marked, at T-1 as uncontroversial, but at the utterance time there are clues for it to be, indeed *not* uncontroversial. The common ground management dimension allows us to capture the concept of a proposition that *should* be uncontroversial (see Grosz 2010 for an analysis in these terms of German *doch*).

We can finally formalize the presuppositions triggered by *poi* (21), modeling that after (20):

- (21) a.  $\llbracket poi \rrbracket^g = \lambda p_{\langle s, t \rangle} : g(s0) \text{ believes that } g(a0) \text{ actively considers the possibility of } \neg p \text{ in } g(w0) \cdot p.$   
 b.  $\llbracket poi \rrbracket^g = \lambda p_{\langle s, t \rangle} : g(s0) \text{ believes that } g(a0) \text{ actively considers the possibility of } \neg(\neg p) \text{ in } g(w0) \cdot p.$

The context trigger one or the other presupposition. The DiP is anchored to the speaker beliefs regarding the context, and the addressee and exclusively a change in these beliefs can cancel the presupposition. If the clues in the context do not license the proposition(s), the use of *poi* is unfelicitous (22):

- (22) ADDRESSEE: l' ho appena conosciuta, dove lavora  
 CL.3SG aux.3PRS just meet.PRT where work.3SG.PRS  
 sua figlia?  
 his/her daughter  
 'I've just met her, where does his daughter work?'  
 SPEAKER: #Lavora a Breno poi.  
 work.3SG.PRS in Breno poi  
 'His daughter works in Breno (obviously).'

Nevertheless, the particle is perfectly acceptable (albeit considered impolite), if the speaker assumes that *p* is factual without significant, or any, clue in the context:

- (23) CONTEXT: In a conversation someone brought up an interesting article talking about Turkish. The speaker is the only one with a background in Linguistics.  
 SPEAKER: È una lingua polisintetica poi!  
 be.3SG a language polysynthetic poi  
 'It's a polysynthetic language, obviously!'

Let us assume that the speaker is an expert in language typology. In that case, the categorization of *p* as uncontroversial and factual is trivial for them, and the use of *poi* is licensed. So it is in the reaction of the addressee that could be along the line of *I've never studied linguistics poi!*.

**5. Conclusion.** The data discussed in this section shows that the role of *poi* in Lombard Italian is to signal that the at-issue content of the *poi*-proposition is initially believed to be uncontroversial by the speaker. At the utterance time, there is evidence in the context that contradicts this belief: *poi* conveys a mirative and counter-expectational reading as a consequence of the mismatch between beliefs and state of affairs. The *poi*-proposition remains, according to the speaker's beliefs, factual, licensing *poi* in any contexts deemed appropriate by the speaker alone.

The novel data and analysis presented in this paper corroborates the hypothesis for the treatment of DiPs are elements triggering expressive presuppositions (Grosz 2020).

The main open question that future studies will address, concerns the relations between syn-tax and the DiPs. At an impressionistic level, and only in light of my native speaker judgment, *poi* favors one reading or the other depending on its position in the clause.

For the time being, if on the right track, the discussion can be extended to other northern Italian varieties and, possibly, other languages where DiPs are attested.

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