

***Sí* in the history of Catalan: from a manner adverb to an assertive marker**

Abstract for an oral presentation at DiGS 2020

PURPOSE: To offer an overview of the evolution of *sí* through the history of the Catalan language and account for the categorical changes that it has undergone from the 12th century to the present day in this Romance variety, with a focus on the changes that took place in the modern period, which have not been described in the literature. *Sí*, from the Latin manner adverb SIC ‘thus’, shows the following grammaticalisation path: **(i)** up to the 12th century, *sí* was used exclusively as a manner adverb, like in Latin; **(ii)** in the 13th century it was reanalysed as an **Emphatic Positive Polarity Particle** (henceforth EPPA) within the scope of non-veridical operators and **(iii)** as a positive sentential proform parallel to English ‘yes’ (competing with *hoc*, the established positive sentential proform that continued to be preferred until the 15th century in higher registers); **(iv)** as an assertive marker in the *sí que* ‘yes that’ configuration, in the 16th century; **(v)** and the loss of the EPPA use and retention of the positive sentential proform and assertive marker ones, in the 18th century.

DATA: The data used for this talk has been extracted from two sources: the *Corpus Informatitzat del Català Antic* (Torruella, Pérez Saldanya & Martines 2009), which contains texts dating from the 11th to the 18th century, and the *Corpus Textual Informatitzat de la Llengua Catalana*, which contains texts from 1833 to 1988 (Rafel i Fontanals 1988).

OUR PROPOSAL: *Sí*: FROM A MANNER ADVERB TO AN ASSERTIVE MARKER

(i) *Sí* AS A MANNER ADVERB: Until the 12th century, *sí* was used as a manner adverb, as it was in Latin, even though its reinforced cognate *així* (in all its spellings) was preferred. Its distribution paralleled that of SIC in Latin, and like Latin SIC, it could be fronted to the left periphery in order to produce *verum* focus, a configuration that focuses the assertive nature of an utterance against a non-veridical background.

(1) Sicut superius scriptus est **si** vos·ó tenré (...).
as above written is thus to;you.CL=it.CL=hold.1SG.FUT
[CP ... [FocP sí_i [... [TP VOS ó tenré_j [VP t_j t_i]]]]] 11th century

(ii) FROM A MANNER ADVERB TO AN EPPA: In Author (2019a), it is shown that the grammaticalisation of *sí* from manner adverb to EPPA occurred within the scope of non-veridical operators, amongst which answers to yes/no questions, the context identified by (Batllori & Hernanz 2008; 2013). By virtue of systematically occurring within the scope of non-veridical operators, *sí* is reanalysed from a manner adverb undergoing fronting to receive *verum* focus to a positive polarity particle base-generated in PolP, with wh-operator-like behaviour (it triggers verb raising to the left periphery, thus yielding VS orders), which further undergoes movement to FocP to express emphatic positive polarity, as shown in (2):

(2) a. [CP ... [FocP ... [PolP ... [TP ... [VP faig així]]]]]
do.1SG thus
c. [CP ... [FocP així/sí_i [PolP t_i [TP ... [VP faig t_i]]]]]
thus/yes do.1SG

Adapted from Batllori & Hernanz (2008:14)

(iii) FROM AN EPPA TO A POSITIVE SENTENTIAL PROFORM: The Old Romance languages had two strategies, now lost in most modern varieties (with the exception of Galician and Portuguese), to answer positively to yes/no questions: verb echo and do-support answers, which entail verb raising to C and TP elision. Positive answers using these strategies could be emphasised by an EPPA *sí* (Rodríguez Molina 2014). Upon the reanalysis of *sí* as a proform, elision is then further applied to the complement of *sí*, which, including the verb, which can identify with the question (Holmberg 2016). Thus, *sí* is reanalysed from EPPA, which necessarily co-occurred with a finite verb, to a positive sentential proform. The EPPA and positive sentential proform functions co-existed until the 18th century:

- (3) E fo demanat P(ere) Alcoy si vol ren dir
 and was.3SG asked Pere Alcoy whether wants anything say.INF
 Affirmative answer: ‘sí’ + elision

[_{CP} [_{FocP} Sí_i [_{Foc}] [_{PolP} [_{Pol'} [+~~Pol_i~~] [_{TP} jo vuy l ren dir]]]]] 13th century

(iv) **FROM POSITIVE SENTENTIAL PROFORM TO ASSERTIVE MARKER:** In Modern Catalan, *sí* can no longer act as an EPPA: it can either act as a positive sentential proform or as an assertive marker (Villa-García & González Rodríguez 2019). The differences between *sí* EPPA and *sí que* assertive marker are several, summarised in Table (1):

| | Sí EPPA | Sí que (assertive marker) |
|---|---------|---------------------------|
| V-to-C | ✓ | × |
| <i>Sí V S</i> order | ✓ | × |
| <i>Sí que</i> ($XP_{Top/Foc}$) (<i>S</i>) <i>V</i> (<i>S</i>) order | × | ✓ |
| Co-occurrence with predicate negator <i>no</i> | × | ✓ |
| Presence of the complementiser <i>que</i> | × | ✓ |

The main difference between *sí* EPPA and *sí que* assertive marker is the presence of the complementiser *que*. We propose that the *sí que* structure is the result of the reanalysis of *sí* sentential proform, followed by a clause introduced by quotative *que*, which produces clauses with a complete left periphery (see (4.a)). We take on the proposal of Villa-García & González Rodríguez (2019) for Modern Spanish and analyse Catalan *sí que* clauses as containing a more complex left periphery, endowed with an AssertiveP projection (4.b) below TopP and above FocP, linked to the expression of strong speaker commitment to the proposition, and not to emphatic positive polarity (thus explaining why *sí que* structures are compatible with lower negation). By the end of the modern era, *sí que* is pervasive in the consulted corpus, and *sí* EPPA disappeared. Its obsolescence was brought upon by (i) the semantic closeness with *sí que*; (ii) by the fact that contemporarily, Catalan reduced word categories that could raise to FocP to produce *verum* focus to Quantified Phrases, and at the same time, it grammaticalised several adverbs as emphatic polarity markers. Some, like *sí*, develop an epistemic dimension beyond their polar one, sharing grammaticalisation path.

- (4) Fàbio: Com de la vostra pàtria antiga?
 Fàbio: how from the your fatherland ancient
 Don Pedro: Sí, que los valencians de assí de Catalunya
 Don Pedro: yes that the valencian from here from Catalonia
 són eixits (...)
 are come

- a. [_{CP} [_{FocP} Sí_i [_{Foc}] [_{PolP} [_{Pol'} [+~~Pol_i~~] [_{TP} [_{VP} de la nostra pàtria antiga]]]]] prosodic pause
 [_{CP} que ... [_{TP} els valencians de assí de Catalunya [_{T'} són eixits [_{VP}]]]]
 b. [_{CP} [_{TopP} [_{AssertiveP} Sí_i [_{Assertive'} que [_{TopP} [_{FocP} [_{PolP} [_{FinP}] [_{TP} els valencians de assí de Catalunya [_{T'} són eixits [...]]]]]]]]] 16th century

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