

FROM CONNECTIVE ADVERB TO MODAL PARTICLE:  
A GENERATIVE ANALYSIS OF *POI*

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to describe and provide a comprehensive analysis of the different uses of Italian *poi* 'then'. We investigate the path that leads connectives to lose their intrinsic logical function and to gradually become more integrated within the syntactic structure and more inclined to express modal meanings. The functions of *poi* are associated with three distinct categories: connectives, discourse markers, and modal particles. Indeed, in given contexts, the basic temporal and logical connective adverb *poi* acquires the pragmatic functions typical of discourse makers and may further develop the meanings that are typical of modal particles. In addition, we propose that the different meanings of *poi* are associated with different positions of the syntactic structure: when it is used as a temporal adverb it is hosted in an Adverb position in the IP, while, when it functions as a connective it is to be located within the CP; modal particle *poi* is bound to the IP, whereas as a discourse marker *poi* is compatible with all three positions.