On the rise of domain adverbials in Italian: the history of the *-mente parlando* construction

Klaus Grübl (Munich)

Abstract

This paper investigates the history of *-mente parlando*, a construction that can be used in modern Italian either as a style disjunct (e. g. *rigorosamente parlando* 'strictly speaking') or as a domain adverbial (e. g. *economicamente parlando* 'economically speaking'). This functional difference will be accounted for synchronically as a case of constructional polysemy, with different semantic types of adjectives (mainly relational vs non-relational) occurring in the *-mente* slot leading to a different reading of the whole construction. Diachronically, the constructional polysemy appears to be the result of a metonymic shift from the older STYLE reading to the newer DOMAIN interpretation. A corpus-based investigation will analyze the syntactic, pragmatic and discursive conditions from which the different uses arose. While both variants are attested from the 14th century on, a massive expansion of domain adverbials formed by *-mente parlando* is observed only in the first half of the 19th century, a tendency which can be explained as a new fashion for "rationalist" discourse organization and which corresponds to similar evolutions described for 19th-century English, French and Spanish.

1   Introduction

Standard Italian has a special type of adverbial, formed by an adverb in *-mente* and the gerundial form of *parlare* 'to speak'. Although this construction is formally and semantically similar to analogous expressions in other European languages, neither its contemporary use nor its diachronic development have yet been systematically described to my knowledge.

1.   It.   **Rigorosamente parlando** sono due opzioni che si escludono mutualmente.

Fr.   **Strictement parlant**, ce sont deux options qui s'excluent mutuellement.

Sp.   **Rigorosamente hablando** son dos opciones que se excluyen mutuamente.

En.   **Strictly speaking**, these are two mutually exclusive options.

2. It. **Economicamente parlando** è stato un gran successo.
    Fr. **Économiquement parlant** ça a été un grand succès.
    Sp. **Económicamente hablando** fue un gran éxito.
    En. **Economically speaking** it was a big success.[1]

Although the adverbial expressions under (1) and (2) seem to be identically constructed at least within the respective languages, there appears to be a semantic difference between type (1) and type (2). Whereas the adverbials in (1) can be paraphrased more or less literally as 'speaking/judging/considering in a strict way/manner', such a meta-linguistic manner reading does not seem appropriate for the sentences listed in (2). These examples rather suggest a reading where the adverb does not express a manner of speaking/judging/considering, but denotes an extra-linguistic domain, for which the utterance is presented as being objectively valid by the speaker. Thus, a paraphrasis of the adverbials in (2) could be 'speaking about the economy' or, more conveniently, 'as for the economic aspects, from an economic point of view'. Accordingly, this type of adverbial has been referred to as "domain", "limitative" or "viewpoint" adverbial in the literature (cf., amongst others, Molinier 1984; Quirk/Greenbaum/Leech/Svartvik ⁹1991: 568–569; Bertuccelli Papi 1992; Van Raemdonck 1999; Molinier/Levrier 2000: 219–237; Guimier 2001; Hermoso Mellado-Damas 2016).

On a formal level, the semantic difference between type (1) and type (2) corresponds with the fact that the adverbs in (2) are derived from relational adjectives, i.e. adjectives which, in turn, are derived from a nominal base and which, according to the literature, do not qualify but classify the noun they modify (cf. Fr. *la voiture présidentielle* 'the President's car'). This explains why an adverb derived from a relational adjective, such as It. *economicamente* in (2), is unsuited to characterize the manner in which a verbal event takes place and why, consequently, *economicamente parlando* in (2) does not mean 'speaking in an economic way/manner'. Correspondingly, adverbs derived from relational adjectives are not gradable (It. #*Molto economicamente (parlando) è stato un gran successo* '#Very economically speaking, it was a big success'; cf. Grossmann 1999: 415; De Cesare/Albom/Cimmino/Lupica Spagnolo ms.).

As such relational adverbs do not express manner (syntactically speaking, they don't serve the core adverbial function of verb modification), it seems likely that, diachronically, the *-mente parlando* construction has gone through a process of semantic change, whereby the older, literal meaning ('speaking in a certain manner') has faded out in favor of the more abstract DOMAIN reading represented by the examples listed under (2). Hence, type (1) appears to represent an earlier stage of the historical development, since here the *-mente* adverb still allows a more or less literal interpretation of the gerundial construction. Considered as a whole, this variant can be described as a meta-linguistic comment by the speaker, namely a comment on his argumentative style, or on the mental disposition that must be adopted for the predication to hold entirely true.[2] Admittedly, in some cases, the difference between type (1) and type (2) expressions may seem hard to delineate on a holistic interpretation level. So,

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[1] Similar constructions exist, e. g., in Portuguese (*rigorosamente/economicamente falando*) and Romanian (*strict/economic vorbind*). In Russian, by contrast, only type (1) is common (*строго говоря*).

[2] Cf. Nilsson-Ehle (1941: 219): "On peut donner à entendre la disposition d'esprit avec laquelle on parle [...]." [One can convey the mental disposition with which one speaks.]

rigorosamente parlando and *economicamente parlando* could both be roughly interpreted as indicating a perspective or a viewpoint from which something is taken under consideration. This possible oscillation between type (1) and type (2) readings most probably results from a metonymic shift that the construction underwent in the course of its evolution: consider, e. g., *philosophically speaking* 'speaking/arguing in a philosophical manner' > 'speaking about philosophical issues'.[3] However, the semantic nature of the – relational vs non-relational – *-mente* adverb is generally evoked as a kind of clear-cut criterion when the class of domain adverbials is defined in a synchronic approach (e. g. Frenguelli 2008: 141, n. 4; Ricca 2004: 476 and 2008: 447–448; Hermoso Mellado-Damas 2016: 200–201; De Cesare/Albom/Cimmino/Lupica Spagnolo ms.). In this view, the constructional polysemy appears to result from the fact that different semantic types of adjectives go through the same word-formation process, i. e. adverbialization by attaching the *-mente* suffix.[4] In any case, the observed polysemic effect calls for a closer examination of both the functional difference between type (1) and type (2) in contemporary language use, and the diachronic evolution (presumably 1 > 2) that led to the varying semantic and syntactic properties of the modern *-mente parlando* construction. Moreover, the intriguing cross-linguistic parallels that can be observed for this special type of adverbial expression suggest that we are dealing with a history of multiple loan-translations, whose chronology and whose cultural backgrounds should also be determined in the diachronic analysis.

In Section 2, I will give an outline of the current state of research on the Italian *-mente parlando* construction and its correspondents in Spanish and French, both in a synchronic and a diachronic perspective. Section 3 will focus on the history of the Italian construction. By analyzing the data collected from three text corpora, I will describe the evolution of the construction, which is attested from the beginning of the 14th century and thus seems to be the forerunner of the analogous expressions we find in other European languages. In Section 4, I will briefly sum up the findings of the diachronic analysis with the aim of providing a better understanding of the variety of functions displayed by the construction in modern language use.

2   State of research

The functional difference presented above for the two variants of the Italian *-mente parlando* construction and its cross-linguistic correspondents (henceforth referred to as MPC1 and MPC2 respectively, with MPC standing for "*-mente parlando* construction") has been observed, amongst others, by Nilsson-Ehle (1941: 219–221) and Molinier/Levrier (2000) with respect to French, and by Klump (2007) with respect to French and Spanish.

Accordingly, Molinier/Levrier (2000) ascribe to the Modern French *-ment parlant* construction the two functions of viewpoint adverbials (MPC2) and of style disjuncts (MPC1).[5] In

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[3] Note that, if interpreted as a meta-linguistic manner adverb (type 1), *philosophically* is in fact gradable: "All tropes are founded on resemblance, or, *more philosophically speaking*, on a more or less perfect identity" (Day [7]1875: 313; example found at random in Google Books, 07/13/2017; italics K.G.).

[4] According to Boas (2013: 246), "constructional polysemy" is represented by "relations between subtypes of constructions that exhibit the same syntactic specifications but differ in their semantics". Cf. also note 17.

[5] "On rappelle que les disjonctifs de style (*confidentiellement, franchement, honnêtement, sérieusement, sincère-ment*, etc.) partagent avec les adverbes de point de vue cette même possibilité d'emploi aux côtés du gérondif

Molinier (2009), "style disjuncts" such as Fr. *confidentiellement* (*parlant*) are defined as a subordinate category of "sentence adverbials". As opposed to "attitudinal disjuncts", which comment on the propositional content (cf. Fr. <u>*Heureusement*</u>, *il est déjà parti* 'Fortunately, he already left'), style disjuncts are considered to comment on the form of the utterance. They thereby allow the speaker to 'account for special conditions of the production of the utterance' ("rendre compte de conditions particulières de la production de l'énoncé"; Molinier 2009: 9–10), such as the speaker's intention to say something in a confidential, brief, or sincere manner. In order to illustrate the meta-linguistic function of such adverbial expressions, a sentence such as (3) can be paraphrased by using a speech-act verb in the first person, which is then modified by the style disjunct and complemented by the remaining part of the original main clause (4).

3.   Fr.   **Confidentiellement (parlant)**, il est déjà parti.
                'Confidentially (speaking), he already left'

4.   Fr.   Je te dis **confidentiellement** qu'il est déjà parti.
                'I tell you **confidentially** that he already left'[6]

It thus turns out that style disjuncts operate on the discourse level, the *plan du dire* in Ducrot's (1984) terminology. By contrast, attitudinal disjuncts, such as Fr. *heureusement* 'fortunately', are a kind of secondary predicate of the utterance, inasmuch as they express a speaker's eval-

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parlant" [We remind that style disjuncts (*confidentiellement* 'confidentially', *franchement* 'frankly', *honnête-ment* 'honestly', *sérieusement* 'seriously', *sincèrement* 'truthfully', etc.) share with viewpoint adverbs this same possibility of being used with the gerund *parlant* 'speaking'] (Molinier/Levrier 2000: 236). – However, it should be pointed out that, as in most other studies on these adverbial functions, MPC are only briefly discussed in the nonetheless comprehensive *Grammaire des adverbes* of Molinier and Levrier (2000). According to the authors, the only difference between MPC and the simple adverbial form (i. e. Fr. *-ment* without *parlant*) is an intona-tional one: "L'emploi du gérondif *parlant* à la suite d'un adverbe de point de vue est toujours possible [...] Notons [toutefois] que la construction *Adv parlant* s'emploie obligatoirement de façon parenthétique" [The use of the gerund *parlant* 'speaking' after a viewpoint adverb is always possible. Note, however, that the Adv *parlant* construction is obligatorily used in parenthetical position] (Molinier/Levrier 2000: 234–235). That's why, in the literature, the syntactic and semantic properties of the adverbial types under consideration here are generally discussed with respect to the simple forms. For the purpose of the present study, I will not call into question the well-foundedness of Molinier and Levrier's claim of functional equivalence of MPC and the simple forms. A corpus-based study on the respective usage of the variants, and on possible stylistic or syntactic differences, would nevertheless be welcome. Moreover, the reverse of Molinier and Levrier's claim that *parlant* can always be added to a simple viewpoint adverb does not seem to be true at least in the case of French MPC1. So, a sentence such as ?*Strictement, ce sont deux options qui s'excluent mutuellement* 'Strictly, these are two mutually exclusive options' is definitely less acceptable than the variant with *parlant* (cf. Klump 2007: 210). By contrast, examples such as *Honnêtement, cet homme est dangereux* 'Honestly, this man is dangerous' are com-monly attested (cf. Molinier 2009). Thus, it might even turn out to be useful to establish more than two func-tional categories of MPC (cf., in this respect, De Cesare 2016: 36, who distinguishes between "[avverbi di frase] di atto linguistico" [speech-act adverbs], such as It. *francamente* 'frankly', and "[avverbi di frase] legati alla forma dell'atto linguistico" [form-oriented speech-act adverbs], such as It. *brevemente* 'briefly'; however, *brevemente* precisely cannot be combined with *parlando* 'speaking' in Modern Italian). In any case, a con-trastive study on acceptability judgements of native speakers will be necessary in order to test the preference for the use of different adverb items with or without the gerundial form in different Romance languages. On stylistic preferences for the use of Romance domain adverbials in *-ment(e)* with or without *parlant/parlando/hablando* cf. De Cesare/Albom/Cimmino/Lupica Spagnolo ms.

[6] Cf. also Mørdrup (1976: 17, 20–26); Melis (1983: 157–161); Mertens (2013: 220–221).

uation of the asserted proposition (*Heureusement, il est parti* 'The fact that he left is fortunate'; cf. Van Raemdonck 1999: 105–108).[7]

By contrast, adverbials such as Fr. *économiquement* (*parlant*) (example 2) are not an instance of sentence adverbials, since they operate on the content level of the utterance. As Van Raemdonck (1999: 105) convincingly argues, such forms are mere modifiers of the predicative relation, in that they limit the validity of the assertion to a given extra-linguistic domain: "l'adverbial réduit [...] l'extension de la relation prédicative pour que l'énonciateur puisse assumer la valeur de vérité de son énoncé".[8] In this respect, the function of domain adverbials is quite similar to that of spatial or temporal frame-setters such as, for example, the underlined adverbials in Fr. *À Naples il fait toujours beau* 'In Naples, the weather is always nice' and It. *Nel 2015 ho traslocato a Milano* 'In 2015, I moved to Milan'.[9] As such expressions form part of the propositional level, they can be focused by using a cleft construction (5). This is also possible in the case of domain adverbials (6), but not in the case of attitudinal (7) or stylic (8) sentence adverbs:

5.   Fr.   C'est **à Naples** qu'il faut toujours beau.
            'It is **in Naples** that the weather is always nice'

6.   Fr.   C'est **économiquement** que ça a été un grand succès
            'It is **economically** that it was a big succes'

7.   Fr.   #C'est **heureusement** qu'il est déjà parti.
            '#It is **fortunately** that he already left'

8.   Fr.   #C'est **confidentiellement** qu'il est déjà parti.
            '#It is **confidentially** that he already left'

Krifka/Musan (2012: 32) underline that, in terms of information structure, frame setting adverbials are similar to contrastive topics, such as *my brother* and *my sister* in (9), as they "split up a complex issue into subissues" by focalizing the resulting partial topics that are then commented on separately.

9.   – What do your siblings do?
      – **My brother** studies philosophy, **my sister** works for BMW.

10.   – Comment va ta mère?
       – **Physiquement** elle va bien, mais pas **psychologiquement**.
       '– How is your mother?
       – **Physically**, she's fine, but not **psychologically**.'

However, frame setters such as the adverbs in (10) are distinct from aboutness topics, as they clearly do not indicate the entity about which information is provided by the speaker (cf.

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[7] Consequently, style disjuncts are also referred to as "speech-act" adverbials or, in the French terminology, as "adverbes d'énonciation" (Van Raemdonck 1999: 106).

[8] Cf. also Nilsson-Ehle (1941: 213–221); Bertuccelli Papi (1992); Nøjgaard (1993: 148); Mertens (2013: 214–215); Hermoso Mellado-Damas (2016: 195–196).

[9] Cf., in this respect, Chafe's (1976: 50) notion of "Chinese style" topics: "What [these] topics appear to do is to limit the applicability of the main predication to a certain restricted domain. [...] the topic sets a spatial, temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds". Cf. also Lambrecht (1994: 118), Krifka (2007: 36) and Frascarelli (2017: 474).

Chafe 1976: 50, as cited here in note 9). By contrast, they actually display a function commonly associated with focus, inasmuch as they select one of a set of alternatives (*physiquement – psychologiquement*) and limit the truth validity of the proposition to the currently chosen frame. By restricting the assertion to one particular dimension of the proposition under question, domain adverbials do not only serve as a useful means of discourse organization, but, again, differ substantially from style disjuncts. In fact, the reason why frame setters can be focalized is because they deal with a relevant at-issue content (in the sense of Potts 2005), namely the domain of validity of the predication. By contrast, style disjuncts such as Fr. *confidentiellement (parlant)* (example 8) cannot be focalized because they do not concern the truth validity of the proposition. This difference will turn out to be a crucial explanandum of the diachronic shift from MPC1 to MPC2 (cf. Section 3).

As for the history of the construction, Klump (2007) shows that in the French and the Spanish documentation, MPC1 is indeed attested earlier than MPC2. Interestingly, Spanish examples of MPC1 can be found round about a hundred years before the oldest attestation in French (Sp. *generalmente hablando*, 1532; Fr. *formellement parlant*, 1624; Klump 2007: 209). By contrast, in both languages, a marked rise in MPC2 occurrences is observable only in the first half of the 19th century (Fr. *géographiquement parlant*, 1825; Sp. *literariamente hablando*, 1834; Klump 2007: 209–210).[10] This finding corresponds remarkably closely to the results of Lenker's (2002) study on the history of English domain adverbials in *-(c)ally*. According to Lenker (2002: 174), it is not by chance that most of these items occur in scientific texts, a genre that experienced massive expansion and institutional diversification in the wake of the 18th-century Age of Enlightenment. As Lenker convincingly shows, the new adverbial type allowed for a new strategy of discourse organization, enabling the speaker to report different epistemic viewpoints in a rational, apparently objective way, without explicitly stating the asserted proposition as a personal judgement (cf. also Ricca 2008: 447–448):

> The new domain adverbials in *-(c)ally* are an excellent vehicle for the new informational pattern. They indicate the speaker perspective (most often sentence-initially) without having to name the speaker directly and thus help to avoid the use of a personal pronoun. [...] Domain adverbials definitely satisfy these new stylic demands because they are an extremely condensed and therefore quick and efficient means of stating the perspective chosen for the proposition, a property that is indispensable for scientific texts [...].
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> (Lenker 2002: 174)

The fact that this adverbial function seems to have notably increased at the same time in English, French and Spanish suggests that we are dealing with a transnational development whose extra-linguistic motivation, i. e. the authors and authoritative texts that introduced the new adverbial fashion of discourse organization, remains to be determined in a comparative perspective, so as to retrace the single borrowing processes that took place between the different languages involved, with English and French being probable giver languages because of their general importance in 18th and 19th century science and philosophy.

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[10] However, sporadic attestations of MPC2 can already be found earlier in French: *politiquement parlant*, 1686; *métaphysiquement parlant*, 1710; *géometriquement parlant*, 1733. Unfortunately, Klump (2007) does not provide any statistical information about the evolution of usage frequencies.

It appears nonetheless that the origin of MPC, and namely of MPC1, is to be found in Italian texts from the 14th century. We can thus hypothesize that the construction was borrowed from Italian by other Romance languages, such as Spanish and French, in the Early Modern Period and that it was only considerably later, at the beginning of the 19th century, that a general, extra-linguistically driven trend developed of refashioning the old MPC1 construction as the new MPC2 pattern by inserting "relational" *-ment(e)*-adverbs denoting scientific methods or disciplines (economics, geography, etc.) into the pre-gerundial slot.[11] It is the aim of the following section to investigate this hypothetical development for the case of Italian.

3   The history of MPC in Italian (13th to 19th century)

The diachronic investigation was conducted by using three corpora of Italian texts: the OVI corpus which includes more than 2300 texts (> 23 million words) from the whole medieval period up to the year of Boccaccio's death (1375); the BIZ corpus, containing more than 1000 texts and covering the history of Italian literature from the 13th to the middle of the 20th century; and the MIDIA corpus, which contains approximately 800 texts (7.5 milion words) and covers the same period as BIZ.[12]

I will discuss the results of my investigation in three steps (sections 3.1–3.3), each step corresponding to a special type or major change in the development of MPC.

3.1   MPC denoting a MANNER OF SPEAKING on the *plan du dit*

The 13th and 14th century attestations which most probably are the origin of MPC1 are represented by cases in which the gerundial construction is a modifier of the verbal phrase (VP) or of a noun (N). As part of the asserted content, such gerundial adjuncts (11, 12) most commonly denote a causal or instrumental circumstance of the core proposition expressed by

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[11] Of course, nothing prevents one in principle from assuming a polygenetic origin of MPC, i. e. its independent rise and semantic evolution in the different languages mentioned. However, the relative chronology of earliest attestations in the three Romance languages considered here actually suggests a monogenetic origin of MPC in Italian, and a later borrowing of the construction by Spanish and French. For reasons of space, the results of my comparative investigation must be reserved for a further publication.

[12] The data from MIDIA enabled the number of attestations for the 15th and 16th centuries (Table 2) and in Giacomo Leopardi's work (Table 4) to be completed. For the 17th and 18th centuries, MIDIA does not provide any results (Table 3). For the medieval period, MIDIA does not provide any additional results to those of OVI and BIZ (Table 1). As for the diatopic variation and the presence of different text types in the corpora, I decided not to restrict the investigation a priori to a certain linguistic area or to certain discourse traditions. In fact, nearly all the occurrences collected were found in religious, philological, or philosophical treatises (the 14th century *Tavola ritonda*, an Arthurian romance preserved in a 15th century manuscript, is just a seeming exception, because the examples of MPC found in this text occur in the argumentative, more treatise-like passages of the romance; cf. examples (24) and (25), as well as Murgia 2015). In turn, the relative discourse-traditional homogeneity of the texts containing MPC is an argument in favor of considering data coming from different regions. Of course, linguistic diversity in pre-modern Italy was extreme on the level of spoken language, and also the written *volgari* reflected this variation to some extent. However, it is well known that erudite medieval and Renaissance writing was addressed to a supra-regional, or even international readership. Thus, even if the dialectal marking of a text may be considerable on a grapho-phonological or a morphological level, the (macro-) syntax of pre-modern prose most often displays common or Latinate patterns, whose "grammar" is obviously more discourse-traditionally than diatopically determined. This assumption is indeed confirmed by the presence of MPC in texts from various regions and, so far, I have not observed any diatopic differences in the use of the construction.

the VP of the sentence. A similar semantic interpretation holds for the case of noun modifying gerunds (13, 14),[13] a usage that has become obsolete in Modern Italian, however.

11.   Qui intend'ello mostrare lo modo del so socorso **poeticamente parlando**, e dixe che
        Virg. poeta li aparve [...] (Jacopo della Lana, 1324–28, OVI)
        'here he tries to explain how he was rescued, by **expressing himself poetically** [...]'

12.   [...] incontenente mandà per li diti gotti, a li quae **dolcementi parlando** procurava
        cum doçe parole mitigar la lor aspreça [...] (Sam Gregorio in vorgà, ~ 1350; OVI)
        '[...] he ensured that their anger was appeased by gentle words, **by speaking to them
        in a gentle way** [...]'

13.   [...] et l'umile **parlando soaveme[n]te**, qua[n]do è inga[n]nato è ripreso [et] no[n] li è
        dato luogo [...] (Trattati di Albertano, 1287/88; OVI)
        '[...] and the humble man **who / as he speaks gently** is reprehended when he is
        cheated [...]'

14.   [...] en leto agrevò de infirmitè ma de sana mente e de bone volu[n]tè e **dretamentre
        parlando**, no se voia[n]do partir de q[ue]sto mondo sença testame[n]to [...] (Doc.
        padov., ~ 1375; OVI)
        '[...] he fell sick and became bedridden, but he remained mentally healthy and
        confident and continued to **speak lucidly** [...]'

Pragmatically, and regardless of their precise syntactic function, the gerundial constructions in the cited examples express propositional information that is reported on by a covert speaker. Thus, in Ducrot's (1984) terminology, the manner of speaking denoted by *-mente parlando* in (11)–(14) is an element of the *plan du dit*. I will henceforth refer to this stage of evolution as MPC0 ("MPC-zero").[14]

3.2   MPC denoting a MANNER OF SPEAKING on the *plan du dire*

A special instance of MPC is when a first person speaker explicitly comments on the speech act he is about to perform by using an illocutionary verb that is adverbially modified by *-mente parlando*. Hence, in such cases, the content level (*plan du dit*) and the discourse level (*plan du dire*) of the utterance merge (15). The same pragmatic interpretation holds for examples in which the head of the VP modified by the gerundial construction is the impersonal form of an illocutionary verb (or, as in (16), the impersonal form of a modal verb governing the infinitive of an illocutionary verb).

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[13] Example (13) could be interpreted as an absolute gerund as well ('and as the humble man speaks gently, he is reprehended when he is cheated'). Example (14), in turn, could possibly be interpreted as an adjunct ('he fell sick and got bedridden, whereby he [...] continued to speak lucidly').

[14] As example (13) shows, the ordering of the adverb and the gerund varies (AdvG or GAdv). Although AdvG turns out to be much more frequent than GAdv from the 13th century on, the latter ordering is nevertheless well attested throughout the whole period under examination here, and it even occurs in contemporary Italian texts. Admittedly, the data analyzed suggest a certain tendency for GAdv to occur preferably in MPC0-contexts. However, its use is by no means excluded for MPC1 or MPC2, both in diachrony and in present-day Italian. For the sake of simplicity, I will not further distinguish between AdvG and GAdv in the present paper, leaving open for future investigation the analysis of possible functional preferences displayed by the two ordering-types.

15. Queste septe circomstantie [...] voglio **brevemente parlando** dichiarare. (Ugo Panzie-ra, Epist., 1312; OVI)
'I want to explain these seven circumstances **briefly / by expressing myself in a concise manner**'

16. La quale privazione solamente nella presente qualità si concede, per la fede rotta da loro nell'apparenza promessa; sì che, **figurativamente parlando** [...] di loro così si può dire. (Jacopo Alighieri, Inf., 1321/22; OVI)
'[...] so that one can call them like that **when speaking figuratively**'

I shall refer to this kind of metalinguistic construction as "MPC1-proto", since, pragmatically, it operates on the *plan du dire* (which, again, is identical here to the *plan du dit* because of the 1st person or the impersonal speaker). Syntactically, by contrast, the gerundial construction still functions as a modifier of the VP, as it explicitly characterizes the way in which the first person or impersonal subject of the sentence is speaking or arguing (*voglio* [...] *dichiarare*, *così si può dire*).

Schematically put, the syntactic structure embedding MPC1-proto can be represented as follows:[15]

17. [**figurativamente parlando**]$_{\text{modifier of VP}}$ [[**si può dire**]$_{\text{speech-act V}}$ [**che** PROPOSITIONAL CONTENT]$_{\text{CP}}$]$_{\text{VP}}$
'if one speaks figuratively, one can say that PROPOSITIONAL CONTENT'

It is thus evident what kind of restructuring took place for MPC1-proto – which explicitly comments on the form of the utterance by modifying an illocutionary verb – to be transformed into the implicit type of metalinguistic comment displayed by MPC1:

18. [**figurativamente parlando**]$_{\text{illocutionary sentence adverbial}}$ [ASSERTION]
'figuratively speaking, ASSERTION'

As it turns out, in MPC1, the speaker simply does without the illocutionary verb. The *plan du dire* nevertheless continues to be evoked by dint of the metalinguistic gerundial construction, which now syntactically functions as a sentence adverbial. This, in turn, allows for a considerable simplification of the whole syntactic structure, since the proposition of the sentence is now expressed by the main clause, not on a CP-level as in the formula given above for MPC1-proto (17).

19. Unde ello scrisse e compose la regula de li monexi grande e utile per discritium e bella per bello ditao, e in la qua, **brevementi parlando**, chi vor la soa vita e li soi costumi sotirmenti conoxe', pò trovà' tuti li acti de la soa dotrina [...] (Sam Gregorio in vorgà, ~ 1350; OVI)
'[...] and in which, **briefly speaking**, those who want to learn about his life and his habits in a subtle way [...]'

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[15] The formula actually corresponds to the construction proposed for paraphrasing sentences modified by a style disjunct. Cf. examples (3) and (4) above.

20.   [...] sì come disdicere l'uomo sé essere del tutto mor[t]ale, è negare, **propiamente parlando**. (Dante, Convivio, 1304–07; OVI)
        '[...] denying that man is absolutely mortal is negating, **properly speaking** [...]'

To sum up, it has to be underlined that all three construction types described in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 are well attested during the same period, i. e. throughout the whole of the 14th century. Quantitatively, my analysis of the textual documentation identified 16 instances of MPC1-proto and 58 (+ 1 ambiguous, possible MPC0) instances of MPC1. This corresponds roughly to a ratio of 1:4 (cf. Table 1; the large number of MPC0-attestations in the corpora was not counted). As will be seen in the next section, the number of MPC1-proto constantly decreases in the course of the 15th to the 18th century, whereas MPC1 proves to be a solidly established construction type from the 14th century up to the present.

In any case, the findings presented in this Section show that MPC1-proto, by the merger of content and discourse level, provided the decisive "bridging context" (cf. Schwenter/Waltereit 2010: 88–89) for the rise of MPC1 in 14th-century Italian.

3.3   From STYLE to DOMAIN: the rise of MPC2

As argued above, the functional difference between MPC1 and MPC2 resides in the fact that MPC1 is a meta-linguistic sentence adverbial, which operates on the utterance level (style disjunct), whereas MPC2 is a modifier of the predicative relation that reduces the extension of the latter to a given extra-linguistic domain (domain adverbial), similarly to spatial or temporal frame-setters. This difference, that can be accounted for synchronically as a case of constructional polysemy, is due to the semantic nature of the *-mente*-adverb appearing in the pre- (or post-)gerundial slot. Thus, the polysemy of MPC is mainly due to a lexical criterion: in MPC1, the adverb denotes a "stylic" quality of the speech-act, the latter being meta-linguistically evoked by the gerundial form *parlando* (MANNER OF SPEAKING); in MPC2, by contrast, no such MANNER-reading is possible because the *-mente*-adverb is derived from a classifying, relational adjective. That is why, in MPC2, the function of the adverb is a more abstract one, namely to relate the propositional content of the sentence to the extra-linguistic domain denoted by the nominal base of the *-mente*-form (economics, politics, etc.).[16] Consequently, *parlando* ends up as a lexically desemanticized, "substantive" element of the construction[17] that can even be cancelled in MPC2 (*Economicamente (parlando), è stato un gran*

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[16] Cf. Nilsson-Ehle (1941: 220): "L'adverbe ne se trouve [...] pas dans un rapport de caractérisation proprement dite avec le verbe qu'il détermine formellement [i. e. the gerund; K.G.]. Pour définir son rapport avec le verbe, il faut avoir recours justement à une ce des formules générales dont « au point de vue » peut être pris comme type." [Properly speaking, the adverb does not characterize the verb [i. e. the gerund] it formally determines. In order to define its relationship to the verb, it is necessary to recur to one of those general paraphrases of the type "from the viewpoint of".]

[17] According to Croft/Cruse (2004: 255–256), linguistic constructions can be characterized by their position on what the authors refer to as the syntax-lexicon continuum. The substantive pole of this continuum is represented by items serving as the lexical, or idiomatic, core of a complex syntactic structure (such as verbs involving an argument structure, or such as *parlando* in MPC). By contrast, the schematic pole is represented by abstract syntactic patterns such as word ordering, categorial slots for arguments (*-mente* in MPC), or morpho-syntactic rules for inflectional marking. However, regardless of the more schematic or substantive character of their elements, all constructions – from abstract sentence form to lexicalized idioms – can be regarded as p a i r i n g s o f f o r m a n d m e a n i n g, i. e. as linguistic units possessing both formal (syntactic, phonological) and functional (semantic, pragmatic) properties which interact in a particular way.

successo, example 2), a property which, again, does not seem to apply for all instances of MPC1 (cf. above, *Rigorosamente #(parlando) sono due opzioni che si escludono mutualmente*, example 1, but *Francamente (parlando) non vedo come potremmo farlo* 'Frankly (speaking), I don't see how we could do that').

Yet, the data analyzed reveal that the seemingly clear-cut synchronic distinction between MPC1 (STYLE) and MPC2 (DOMAIN) is not that easy to trace in a diachronic perspective. For, although the data examined by Klump (2007) suggest that, in Spanish and French, a rather abrupt reinterpretation of the older MPC1-type occurred at the beginning of the 19th century, the case of Italian shows that at least special instances of MPC2 are indeed attested well before the modern period. Table 1 shows that, beside 16 + 58 (+1) instances of MPC1-proto and MPC1 (cf. Section 3.2), there are also 24 occurrences suggesting an MPC2-reading in the medieval documentation. Concretely, the attestations of MPC2 represent seven adverbial items, which are rendered in bold in Table 1: *materialmente*, *moralmente*, *naturalmente*, *spiritual(e)mente*, *temporalmente*, *umanamente*, *ystorialmente*.

Lexeme	MPC1-proto	MPC1	MPC2
allegoricamente		1	
br(i)evemente/-i	7	13	
comunemente		12	
convenientemente		1	
figurativamente	1		
finalmente		1	
general(e)mente	1	5 (+ 1 possible MPC0)	
largamente	2	3	
materialmente			3
moralmente			2
naturalmente			6
propriamente	4	12	
ragionevolmente	1		
retoricamente		1	
sanamente		1	
semplicemente		8	
spiritual(e)mente			7
temporalmente			3
umanamente			2
ystorialmente			1
Total	16 // 16 %	58.5[18] // 59 %	24 // 24 %

Table 1: Number of attestations of MPC1-proto, MPC1 and MPC2 in the 14th century (OVI and BIZ)

Interestingly, three of these items – *ystorialmente* (21), *spiritual(e)mente* (22) and *moralmente* (23) – each denote one of the four levels of the medieval practice of scriptural exegesis, namely the *quattuor sensus scripturae* (i.e. *sensus historicus* or *litteralis*, referring to earthly existence; *sensus spiritualis* or *allegoricus*, referring to dogmatic interpretation; *sensus mora-*

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[18] Ambiguous cases are counted as 0.5.

lis or *tropologicus*, referring to the dimension of morality and charity; *sensus anagogicus*, referring to eschatology).

21.   Nota come omne perfizione cussí **ystorialmente parlando** come alegorice [i.e. **spiritualmente**; K.G.] pertegna a vitta activa, inperçò che lla contempiativa più su se spacia come apareràe. (Jacopo della Lana, Purg., 1324–1328; OVI)
        'Note how every perfection – both **historically** and spiritually **speaking** – belongs to *vita activa* [...]'

22.   **Spiritualemente parlando** per questo lione possiamo intendere il Nostro Signore Giesù Cristo [...] (Esopo tosc., 1388; OVI)
        '**Spiritually speaking / On a spiritual** level this lion stands for Jesus our Lord'

23.   Or questo Minos, **moralmente parlando**, significa Giustizia, et uno punitore di vizii [...] (Jacopo della Lana, Inf., 1324–1328; OVI)
        '**Morally speaking / On a moral level** this Minos means Justice [...]'

Like *ystorialmente*, *temporalmente* (24) refers to earthly existence and is generally used as a complementary notion of *spiritualmente* in the textual documentation.

24.   Che sappiate, che non èe niuna cosa che tanto piaccia allo liale e al verace amante e che più muova ad amare altrui, quanto fae l'onestade della persona, **parlando temporalmente** e **spiritualmente** [...] (Tavola ritonda, 1300–1349; OVI)
        '[...] nothing pleases the loyal and true lover, and nothing brings one to love another person, as much as does the honesty of the person, **temporally** and **spiritually speaking** [...]'

Also *materialmente* roughly pertains to the conceptual field of earthly existence (25); more precisely, it refers to the physical aspects of divine creation (26). *Umanamente* refers to mankind and human civilization (27). Finally, *naturalmente* does not yet display the evidential function it most commonly has in Modern Italian (cf. Ricca 2008: 447–448; Ricca 2010: 734), but simply means 'by nature' or 'with respect to nature' (28):

25.   E questo benigno signore Iddio padre, che volle carne umana, si è quello che nutrica il mondo e le criature; ma, **temporalmente** e **materialmente parlando**, la gente del mondo il mondo mantiene: e si mantiene in quattro colonne; cioè in leanza, in prodezza, in amore e in cortesia. (Tavola ritonda, 1300–1349; OVI)
        '[...] **temporally** and **materially speaking**, it is the people of the world that maintain the world [...]'

26.   [...] perchè nel mondo è contrario ordine all'ordine del Cielo; cioè, che nel mondo materiale quella cosa è più divina, che n'è più di lungi; e in Cielo quella cosa è più divina, ch'è più presso a Dio. Verbi-grazia, **materialmente parlando**, il cielo stellato è più di lungi dalla terra, che la spera di Saturno; ed è più virtù infusa dal nono cielo, che [dal]la spera di Saturno: dunque sente più della divinitade che Saturno, o che Giove, o altre stella; e quanto la cosa è più presso alla terra, tanto meno sent[e] della divinità: il contrario è in Cielo. (Ottimo, Par., before 1334; OVI)

'[...] **materially speaking**, the starry sky is farther from Earth than the sphere of Saturn [...]'

27.   Ed anche **umanamente parlando**, se tutti fossero re, dove i popoli da loro retti? (Simone Fidati, Ordine, 1333; OVI)

'And also **humanly speaking**, if all were kings, where would the peoples governed by them be?'

28.   [...] **naturalmente parlando**, Saturno secondo il detto de' poeti e astrolagi è lo Dio de' lavoratori, ma più vero la sua infruenza porta molto a l'overaggio e semente de le terre [...] (G. Villani, before 1348; OVI)

'[...] **with respect to nature**, Saturn is the God of workers, according to what poets and astrologists say [...]'

To sum up, the cited examples show that the metonymic potential of MPC was in fact exploited long before the 19th century. This, however, is not surprising, since metonymy is a quasi-ubiquitous semantic process that can occur at any time in the everyday use of lexical or constructional units (cf. Waltereit 1998 and 1999; Koch 2008). Hence, the metonymic reinter-pretation of MPC1 as a viewpoint or domain adverbial (SPEAKING IN A CERTAIN MANNER > ARGUING FROM A CERTAIN PERSPECTIVE > CONCERNING/AS FOR A CERTAIN DOMAIN) appears to be a relatively flexible and naturally occurring process, that was apparently triggered in the discursive context of the medieval tradition of philological interpretation. In fact, expressions such as *spiritualmente parlando* or *moralmente parlando* are intrinsically polysemic, inas-much as they can be understood as denoting both a MANNER OF ARGUING (MPC1) and an epistemic DOMAIN for which the predication that is about to be made holds true (MPC2). It is thus likely that the model of *spiritual(e)mente* and *moralmente parlando*, textually entrenched by the philological practice of exploring the *quattuor sensus scripturae*, favored the transfer of the MPC-pattern to adverbs such as *ystorialmente*, *temporalmente*, *materialmente*, *natural-mente* and *umanamente*, which were also used in the context of scriptural exegesis, but whose lexical meaning is in fact inappropriate for a literal reading when they are combined with *parlando* (except for *naturalmente* and *umanamente*, which, however, have a quite different meaning from those attested in the medieval documentation when they are interpreted literally as a "natural" or a "human way of speaking"). Interestingly, intrinsically polysemic *spiritual-mente* turns out to be the most frequent of the seven adverbial items attested with an MPC2-reading (cf. Table 1). So, the "birth" of MPC2 as a constructional variant of MPC is apparent-ly due to the fact that the use of MPC with *-mente*-adverbs such as *spiritualmente* 'spiritu-ally', open to both a MANNER and a DOMAIN-reading (MPC1/MPC2), gave rise to the analo-gous, textually adjacent use of MPC with *-mente*-adverbs disfavoring an MPC1-reading, so that MPC2 remained as the only possible meaning.

This interpretation appears to be plausible also with respect to information structure. In prag-matic terms, the epistemic dimensions associated with the *quattuor sensus scripturae* repre-sent a set of alternative approaches to the truth validity of a proposition (cf. the number of paired occurrences such as in (21): *cussí ystorialmente parlando come alegorice*). Thus, the paradigmaticity of the four *sensus* could explain why MPC assumed a focalizing, delimiting function in the very context of scriptural exegesis. In fact, this highly conventionalized discourse tradition could well have served as a "bridging context" for the reinterpretation of

spiritualmente or *moralmente parlando*, whose original meaning ('if one argues on spiritual/moral grounds, one can say that [...]') was somehow inevitably superimposed by a focal, "at-issue" reading because of the presence of easily accessible, paradigmatic alternatives (*temporalmente – materialmente – ...*) in the shared cultural knowledge of the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader. In this view, the functional change from MPC1 to MPC2 can be regarded as an effect of "common ground management" in the sense of Krifka/Musan (2012: 4f., 33–34). By using delimiting adverbials, the speaker explicitly marks that the current utterance only satisfies a particular dimension of the complex topic under discussion and, thus, may not yet respond entirely to the communicative goal of the discourse (i. e. a holistic answer to the question at issue). However, a sort of inter-subjective disclaimer function was already displayed by MPC1, inasmuch as the meta-linguistic comment performed by a style disjunct can be understood as an indication to the hearer as to how he should deal with the information received, e. g. not to take it too literally ("figuratively speaking"), not to pass it on to others ("confidentially speaking"), or not to be shocked by the speaker's straightforwardness ("frankly speaking").

As for the 15th to the 18th century, Table 2 and Table 3 show that only a small number of new adverbial items were used in MPC2 during this period, namely *mondanamente* (1508) (29), *civilmente* (1571) (30), and *logicamente* (1584) (31), which, however, is intrinsically polysemic and, thus, open to an MPC1/MPC2-interpretation like *spiritualmente* or *moralmente*. By contrast, all the other occurrences with a possible MPC2-reading represent items already attested in the medieval documentation (*moralmente*, *naturalmente*, *umanamente*).

29.   [...] che doverai tu fare [...] a consolare el Principe con tutta la città tua de Milano, quali hanno in questo tempo facto la magior perdita che **mondanamente parlando** mai potessero fare? (N. da Correggio, Rime, 1508; BIZ)
        '[...] the biggest loss they could ever make **in an earthly respect** [...]'

30.   Tre conditioni di persone habbiamo noi a dire, che ragionevolmente ci siano: Nobili, Vili, et uno stato mezano, che tra la nobiltà de gli uni, et la viltà de gli altri sia da collocare. Et **civilmente parlando**, diremo, che nelle città sono per ordinario i Gentilhuomini, i Cittadini, et la Plebe. (G. Muzio, Il Gentiluomo, 1571; MIDIA)[19]
        '**As for the population structure**, one can say that, in the cities, there generally live courtiers, citizens, and the common people'

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[19] One may wonder if, according to my typology of construction-types established in Section 3.2, the structure of (30) should not be described as a kind of "MPC2-proto", since, formally, *civilmente parlando* seems to modify a VP whose head is an illocutionary verb in the first person governing a CP (*diremo che*). However, the adverb *civilmente* definitely excludes a MANNER-reading in the given context, as it refers to socio-demographic aspects of urban civilization and, thus, clearly requires an MPC2-reading. Consequently, rather than basing the syntactic analysis of (30) on a literal, semantically odd interpretation of the relation between the gerundial phrase and *diremo che*, it seems more appropriate to assume a case of structural persistence of the MPC1-proto type, which, however, has apparently lost its original, compositional meaning. Hence, it appears doubtful whether *civilmente parlando* is syntactically well described as a VP-modifier in (30). On a formal level, the gerundial phrase may be correctly analyzed as such; semantically, by contrast, it clearly functions as a domain adverbial.

31. Come, **logicamente parlando**, tutte le specie hanno equal raggione al medesimo geno, tutti gli individui alla medesima specie; cossì da un motore universale infinito, in un spacio infinito, è un moto universale infinito da cui dependono infiniti mobili e infiniti motori, de quali ciascuno è finito di mole ed efficacia. (G. Bruno, De l'infinito universo, 1584; BIZ)

'Just as, **logically speaking**, all species are equally related to the same genus, and all individuals to a single species [...]'

Lexeme	MPC1-proto	MPC1	MPC2
assolutamente	1	3	
brevemente		1 (+1 possible MPC0)	
civilmente			1
comun(e)mente		2	
convenientemente		1	
generalmente		5	
impropriamente	1		
largamente		1	
liberamente		2	
logicamente		0.5 (ambiguous case)	0.5 (ambiguous case)
mondanamente			1
naturalmente			1
ordinariamente		2	
ordinatamente		1	
propriamente	1	6	
semplicemente		2	
sodamente		1	
spagnolescamente		1	
strettamente		1	
toscanamente	1		
(h)umanamente			3
universalmente		4	
veramente	1	1	
Total	**5 // 11 %**	**35 // 75 %**	**6.5 // 14 %**

Table 2: Number of attestations of MPC1-proto, MPC1 and MPC2 in the 15th and 16th centuries (BIZ and MIDIA)

Lexeme	MPC1-proto	MPC1	MPC2
brevemente		1	
chiarissimamente		1	
comunemente		1	
generalissamente		1	
generalmente	1	12	
liberamente		2	
mondanamente			1
moralmente			1
poeticamente		1	
rigidamente	1		
scolasticamente		0.5 (possibly MPC0)	
strettamente	1		
umanamente			3
universalmente		2	
veramente		1	
Total	**3 // 10 %**	**22.5 // 74 %**	**5 // 16 %**

Table 3: Number of attestations of MPC1-proto, MPC1 and MPC2 in the 17th and 18th centuries (BIZ)

Finally, in a broader diachronic perspective, Table 4 shows that a marked increase in adverbial items instantiating MPC2 was not observable before 1800. By contrast, MPC2 experienced notable expansion in the first half of the 19th century, with a number of different adverbial items being newly employed in combination with *parlando*.

	14th	15th and 16th	17th and 18th	19th
materialmente	•			
moralmente	•		•	•
naturalmente	•	•		•
spiritualmente	•			
temporalmente	•			
umanamente	•	•	•	•
ystorialmente	•			
civilmente		•		
logicamente		•		•
mondanamente		•	•	
filosoficamente[20]				•
geometricamente				•
praticamente				•
rimotamente				• (MPC1?)
immediatamente				• (MPC1?)
particolarmente				• (MPC1?)
indipendentemente				•

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[20] Attestations from Giacomo Leopardi's work are rendered in italics.

cristianamente				•
ragguagliatamente				•
proporzionatamente				•
nazionalmente				•
poeticamente	[MPC0]		[MPC1]	•
grammaticalmente				•
confusamente				• (MPC1?)
fisicamente				•
metafisicamente				•
istoricamente				•
socialmente				•
geologicamente				•

Table 4: Chronological overview of lemmata attested with possible MPC2-reading (OVI, BIZ, MIDIA)

Interestingly, it is in the essays by Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837) that most of the new instances of MPC2 are attested for the first time. However, MPC1 (including cases with polysemic adverbs, admitting both a STYLE and a DOMAIN reading) also abound in Leopardi's work, with *generalmente parlando* being by far the most frequently used item. For reasons of space, the detailed analysis of Leopardi's use of MPC, and of possible foreign models, must be left open for further investigation. Nevertheless, Leopardi's progressive, or even excessive use of MPC seems to be fully consistent with Lenker's (2002) observations on the rise of English domain adverbials in *-(c)ally*, and with the diachrony of MPC in Spanish and French, as outlined by Klump (2007). When looking closer at the list of adverbial items introduced to MPC-use by Leopardi – who, by the way, is well known in literary history for his creative and innovative style (cf. Tesi 2009) –, the rather artificial and technical character of most of these coinages becomes immediately obvious. Most often, MPC refers to a quite specific extra-linguistic domain (e. g *filosoficamente e geometricamente parlando* (32), *grammaticalmente parlando* 'grammatically speaking', *nazionalmente parlando* 'on a national level') or displays a subtle relativizing (limiting) function within the argumentative structure of the texts (e. g. *rimotamente parlando* 'in a remote sense, from an abstract viewpoint' (33), *ragguagliatamente e proporzionatamente parlando* 'comparatively and proportionally speaking' (34), *confusamente parlando* 'approximately' (35)).

32. Non si può negare che **filosoficamente** e **geometricamente parlando**, essi [gli italiani "di mondo"] non abbiano assai più ragione dei francesi e degli altri che pensano e operano diversamente, e che per conseguenza in questa parte essi non sieno, quanto alla pratica, assai più filosofi. (G. Leopardi, Discorso sopra lo stato presente dei costumi degl'Italiani, 1824; MIDIA)
   'One cannot deny that, **with respect to philosophy and logical rigor**, these [Italians del mondo] have much more reason than the French and than the others who think and operate differently [...]'

33. Gli uomini politi di quelle nazioni si vergognano di fare il male come di comparire in una conversazione con una macchia sul vestito o con un panno logoro o lacero; si muovono a fare il bene per la stessa causa e con niente maggiore impulso e sentimento che a studiar esattamente ed eseguir le mode, a cercar di brillare cogli abbigliamenti, cogli equipaggi, coi mobili, cogli apparati: il lusso e la virtù o la giustizia

hanno tra loro lo stesso principio, non solo **rimotamente parlando**, il che è da per tutto e fu quasi sempre, ma **parlando immediatamente** e **particolarmente**. (G. Leopardi, Discorso sopra lo stato presente dei costumi degl'Italiani, 1824; MIDIA)

'[...] luxury and virtue or justice follow the same principle, and this is not only valid **from an abstract viewpoint**, which is so everywhere and has always been so, but also **in a very direct** and **particular sense**'

34.   Perchè la medicina ha fatto da Ippocrate in qua meno progressi, e sofferto meno cangiamenti essenziali che, possiamo dire, qualunque altra scienza, in pari spazio di tempo; e quindi conservasi forse più vicina di ogni altra alla condizione e misura ec. in cui venne dalla Grecia; perciò quella parte della sua nomenclatura che si compone di vocaboli greci, è forse maggiore che in qualsivoglia altra scienza o disciplina, **ragguagliatamente** e **proporzionatamente parlando**. (G. Leopardi, Zibaldone di pensieri, 1821; BIZ)

'[...] because the part of its terminology that consists of Greec words is maybe larger **comparatively** and **proportionally speaking** than in any other science or discipline'

35.   L'arte dello scrittore si riduce e deve ridurre a osservar qual effetto quali idee, appresso a poco ed in grosso e **confusamente parlando**, producano o sogliano produrre tali o tali parole e combinazioni e usi loro nel piú degli uomini o de' nazionali generalmente considerati, nel piú delle circostanze di ciascheduno e nelle piú ordinarie, per natura o per gli abiti piú invalsi ec. ec. (G. Leopardi, Zibaldone di pensieri, 1823; BIZ)

'[...] the writer's art is and has to be reduced to observing which effect is produced by which ideas, generally and **approximately speaking** [...]'

Though, as the list contains a number of adverbial items that are neither derivations from relational adjectives (e. g. *indipendentemente* 'independently', *ragguagliatamente* 'comparatively') nor can be interpreted as a meta-linguistic comment on the style of the speech-act, the often evoked, allegedly clear-cut distinction between domain adverbials, as derived from relational adjectives, and style disjuncts, as derived from qualitative adjectives, proves to be somehow idealized (cf. also, in this respect, earlier attested items such as *temporalmente* or *civilmente*). A comparable classification problem arises from examples such as *rimotamente* (33) or *confusamente parlando* (35), which may be interpreted as instances of MPC1 when considered in isolation (*?molto/più rimotamente/confusamente parlando*). Yet, (33) clearly requires contrastive focus (*non solo rimotamente parlando* [...] *ma parlando immediatamente e particolarmente*), a feature that normally would not seem acceptable for a reading as style disjunct.[21] So, at least Leopardi's particular use of MPC overrides to a certain extent the conventional categorizations. It could thus appear more appropriate to consider MPC1 and MPC2 as prototypical functions of MPC, representing, in a way, the end-points of a semantic continuum. For, as the examples show, the manifold ways of metonymic reinterpretation license a range of intermediate readings that, in fact, hardly fit one or another of the previously stated, prototypical variants of MPC, particularly since the polysemic potential of the

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[21] So, French and Italian native speakers do not accept the focalizing of style disjuncts, such as in *#C'est strictement parlant que la fraise est une noix*, *#E' rigorosamente parlando che la fragola è una noce* 'Strictly speaking, strawberries are nuts'.

construction was apparently exploited by Leopardi in a highly creative, maybe even conscious way. Nevertheless, it appears that this creative activity actually served the elaboration of a new strategy of discourse organization and, hence, contributed to the entrenchment and the functional sharpening of the category of domain adverbials.

4   Conclusion

This paper has investigated the history of Italian *-mente parlando*, a construction generally considered as having two functions in the modern language, namely MPC1 ("style disjunct") and MPC2 ("domain adverbial"). Synchronically, this difference can be accounted for as a case of constructional polysemy, with different semantic types of adjectives put into the *-mente* slot leading to a different reading of the construction. In a diachronic perspective, the polysemy of MPC appears to be the result of a metonymic shift from the original MANNER reading to the newer, more abstract DOMAIN reading. A corpus-based investigation showed that both variants of Italian MPC are attested from the 14th century on. More precisely, it was found that MPC1 arose from explicit metalinguistic comments by a first person or an impersonal speaker on the "style" of the utterance performed (MPC1-proto). By contrast, the domain-adverbial use of MPC appears to have originated in late-medieval treatises exploring the *quattuor sensus scripturae*. In this discursive context, intrinsically polysemic adverbs, open for both a STYLE and a DOMAIN reading such as *spiritual(e)mente* and *moralmente*, adopted a focalizing, "delimiting" function. However, a massive expansion of MPC2 is not observed until the first half of the 19th century, and most notably in the essays by Giacomo Leopardi, a tendency which corresponds remarkably closely to similar evolutions described for 19th-century English, French and Spanish. Nonetheless, the analysis of both the medieval and the modern attestations of MPC suggests that the distinction between MPC1 and MPC2 is in fact not as clear-cut as is generally assumed. So, the often evoked lexical criterion of "relational" vs "qualitative" adjectives at the base of the *-mente* adverb proves to be somehow fuzzy. It was consequently argued that MPC1 and MPC2 should better be regarded as prototypical variants of MPC, representing the end-points of a metonymic continuum that allows for intermediate readings between the poles of STYLE and DOMAIN, according to the particular, also contextually determined meaning of the individual *-mente* items. This, in fact, is precisely what explains the shift from MPC1 to MPC2 in the context of 14th-century philological reasoning. By distinguishing between more and less prototypical uses, further investigation may give a more fine-grained descriptive account of the semantic, pragmatic and syntactic properties of different MPC types, both in a synchronic and a diachronic perspective. These findings should be integrated within a more comprehensive study on the history of domain adverbials, with special consideration of simple *-mente* forms, used without *parlando*.

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