Modelling the syntax-discourse interface
A syntactic analysis of *please*

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Many scholars have proposed a Speech Act Phrase (SAP) high in the left periphery that is said to encode aspects of the discourse context, including illocutionary force. However, the potential identity of the head of this projection is up for debate. I propose that *please* is a candidate for the overt SA head in English. Distributional, interpretive and acquisition data show that there are (minimally) two types of syntactically-integrated *please*. One is a functional head that marks an utterance as a request. The other is an adverbial whose use is determined by contextual factors and that marks politeness.

1.   Introduction

Speech act theory is undergoing a productive revival. Many authors agree on the principle of a Speech Act projection (SAP) above the main clause, headed by a marker of illocutionary force, overt or covert, in its head.

Illocutionary force is difficult to find a unified explanation for, as it is neither propositional nor as divorced from syntax as pragmatic factors such as subtext. I propose here that illocutionary force has a syntactic reflex and is not purely pragmatic. I assume that illocutionary force refers to the primary intention of the speaker in uttering the sentence given the syntactic clause type that she chooses, similarly to Coniglio & Zegrean (2012), though this characterisation of illocutionary force will certainly not be the final word on the matter.

If illocutionary force is present in syntax, it is fair to assume that it is overtly spelled out in at least some cases. In this article, I will examine a candidate for the overt spell-out of illocutionary force in English, namely *please*. *Please* has been variously analysed as an adverbial, a discourse marker, and a politeness marker, but I will show that there are in fact many types of *please* in English and that they vary according to their position in the clause, their compatibility with different clause types and the implicatures that they give rise to.

I will present a small corpus study of *please* and its distribution, data regarding the use of *please* by children acquiring British English and other syntactic and semantic data. On the basis

of the syntactic distribution and characteristics of *please* and the patterns of its acquisition it will be proposed that there are (minimally) two types of syntactically-integrated *please* and that one of these is an overt realisation of the SA head (referred to in this article as the IA, Illocutionary Act, head). My primary focus will be on the proposed illocutionary act head instation of *please*; it is only compatible with imperative and interrogative clause-types and bestows requesting force on the clauses in which it appears. This type of *please* is predominantly clause-initial though there is a clause-medial variant. The other type of *please* is a politeness marker; this marker is clause-final and can combine not only with interrogatives and imperatives but with declaratives as well. There is also a third type of *please* that I will call standalone *please*. Standalone *please* is not integrated at the clause level but at the discourse level. I will then examine the consequences of this work for speech act theory before concluding.

For clarity, I lay out here the assumptions that I make about what constitutes the illocutionary act of requesting and how I will treat these in my methodology. Requesting illocutionary acts are direct acts made by the speaker. Such an act consists of an utterance through which the speaker requires and obliges the addressee to act in a specified way, whether or not that act contains a linguistic component. Though this definition seems to correlate with Searle's (1979) class of 'directives', there is a key difference. While Searle includes all types of question in his class of directives, I will show that not all types of questions can be requests. Some questions may only be interpreted as information-seeking questions where others may be interpreted as either information-seeking questions or requests. Only the latter type of question is compatible with *please*. Imperatives are another clause type that canonically forms requesting illocutionary acts. There is no reason to assume that politeness is directly a part of making a request.

Subsequently, indirect requests that make use of context and subtext to form requests, such as the use of "It's cold in here" to mean "Close the window", are not classed as requesting illocutionary acts. However, these kinds of sentences will not be excluded from my data; instead, the data will show that indirect requests are almost never marked with *please* precisely because they are statements at the syntactic level before they are interpreted as requests at the pragmatic level.

2.   *A syntactic investigation of 'please'*

This section will be structured as follows: the distribution of *please* over clause types will be examined using the ICE-GB corpus (University College London 1998); other syntactic characteristics of *please* will be outlined; and the acquisition of *please* will be detailed using examples from the Manchester corpus (Theakston et al. 2001) in CHILDES (MacWhinney 2000).

2.1.   *Distribution of 'please'*

2.1.1.   *Canonical positions of 'please'*

While syntactically-integrated *please* can appear sentence-initially, -medially or -finally, it seems that there are some restrictions according to clause types. The paradigm is illustrated

in examples (1)-(4).[1]

(1)   Interrogative clauses

    a.   Please can I have a beer?
    b.   Can I please have a beer?
    c.   Can I have a beer please?

(2)   Imperative clauses

    a.   Please get me a beer.
    b.   Get (*please) me (*please) a beer.
    c.   Get me a beer please.

(3)   Declarative clauses

    a.   *Please I'll have a beer.[2]
    b.   *I'll please have a beer.
    c.   I'll have a beer please.

(4)   Declaratives outside of question-response contexts

    a.   *Please there's a mouse there.[3]
    b.   *There please is a mouse there.
    c.   *There's a mouse there please.

2.1.2.   *Naturalistic uses of 'please'*

To examine in more detail the types of clause in which *please* appears, a study of naturalistic uses of *please* was conducted using the International Corpus of English: Great Britain edition (ICE-GB). The ICE-GB corpus contains 199 instances of *please* (excluding uses of the verb

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[1]Imke Driemel (p.c.) notes that the paradigm is almost exactly the same in German, with the exceptions of (2b), as illustrated in (i), and (3b), as illustrated in (ii):

    (i) Gib mir bitte ein Bier.
    (ii) Ich möchte bitte ein Bier.

I believe that (i) and (ii) are acceptable in German compared to English due to the make-up of the German Mittelfeld, which provides natural clause-medial positions for particles. English does not have the same range of clause-medial positions for discourse-oriented elements: it does not make use of discourse particles below tense; assertive force tends to be marked on the tense-marked element, for example via the dummy auxiliary 'do' (Duffield 2007; Roeper & Woods in preparation); speech-act adverbs can only appear sentence-medially if pronounced as parentheticals. The acceptability of (ii) may, however, mean that the make-up of *bitte* is slightly different to *please*, as it may be integrated clause-medially into declaratives where *please* may not. Alternatively, given that clause-initial *please* is also blocked in declaratives in German, perhaps the medial *bitte* in (ii) is an adverbial rather than a force marker. Driemel (p.c.) also suggests that this is so as (ii) only receives a polite, not a requesting, reading.

[2]Note that this linear string is possible with a prosodic break between *please* and the rest of the clause:

    (i) Please - I'll have a beer.

In this case *please* is a standalone item, a request in and of itself and is not part of the same clause as "I'll have a beer", and as such is not *clause*-initial in the same way as (1a), for example. Standalone *please* will be dealt with later in section 2.1.3.

[3]See the previous footnote.

to please).[4] The tables below show the distribution of *please* in different clausal positions and across different clause types. Table 1 shows how *please* is distributed across different clausal positions in the ICE-GB corpus. It shows that clause-initial *please* is more than twice as common as clause-final *please*, which is in turn twice as common as clause-medial *please*.

Table 1: Clausal position of *please* in the ICE-GB corpus (overall)

Position	Number of occurrences
Clause-initial	114
Clause-medial (VP edge)	27
Clause-final	50
Other (e.g. standalone)	8
Total	199

Table 2 shows the clausal position of *please* in the corpus's speech texts: the majority of examples of clause-final *please* appear in the speech part of the corpus, and clause-final *please* is more common than any other position.

Table 2: Clausal position of *please* in the ICE-GB corpus (speech only)

Position	Number of occurrences
Clause-initial	28
Clause-medial (VP edge)	6
Clause-final	46
Other (e.g. standalone)	6
Total	86

Table 3 shows which types of clause co-occur with *please* in the speech part of the corpus. *Please* predominantly occurs with the clause types typically used to perform requests, namely interrogatives and imperatives.

Table 3: Clause types with *please* in the ICE-GB corpus (speech)

Clause type	Number of occurrences
Declaratives	4
Fragments (e.g. yes, no, NP)	16
Standalone	2
Interrogatives	28
Imperatives	35
Conditional	1
Total	86

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[4]The corpus was not annotated for clause type so this annotation was done by hand. Clause type was determined by classical diagnostics such as verb position, verb mood and so on. Punctuation was not used as a reliable diagnostic particularly because of variation in its use with respect to embedded clauses.

Table 4 shows the clause types that co-occur with *please* in the written part of the corpus. The results are the same as in table 3, though there are fewer interrogatives and fragments in the written corpus.

Table 4: Clause types with *please* in the ICE-GB corpus (written)

Clause type	Number of occurrences
Declaratives	3
Standalone	4
Interrogatives	20
Imperatives	86
Total	113

It is clear that clause-initial *please* is the most common position overall in the corpus and predominates in writing. However, clause-final *please* is the most common position in spoken texts and is much more common in speech than in writing in general. With respect to different clause types, imperatives are the most common clause types to host *please* in both spoken and written texts, followed by interrogatives. Given that these are the canonical forms for requesting, that may not seem surprising. In contrast, *please* is rare with declaratives in either speech or writing. The fact that *please* occurs in declaratives at all, given that they are not used to express direct requests, deserves scrutiny.

2.1.3.   Declarative clauses and 'please'

Please appears in the following declarative sentences in the ICE-GB corpus; (5) shows *please* in declaratives in speech contexts and (6) in written contexts.

(5)   (In speech contexts)

    a.   I'll have white ice cream please.

    b.   I'll have strawberry ice cream please.

    c.   So I ask for single questions please.

    d.   I want to hear what the witness says. please

(6)   (In written contexts)

    a.   "Please, he's my son."

    b.   "Please, Brett… I hate to see you angry like this."

    c.   The policeman said, "I'd like your full name and address, please."

The examples in (5) and (6c) show utterance-final *please*. The roles of these sentences in discourse fall into three categories, as listed in (7). These categories are very subtly different and were determined based on the wider context of the examples in (5) and (6c).

(7)   a.   Responses to questions, e.g. *I'll have strawberry ice cream please.*[5]

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[5]It is true that every conversational move can be seen as an answer to a question under dynamic semantics frameworks such as Question Under Discussion (Roberts 2012) or Inquisitive Semantics. In this case, however, I

b.   Overt performative requests, e.g. *So I ask for single questions please.*
c.   Indirect requests that express desire on the part of the speaker, e.g. *I want to hear what the witness says please.*

Interestingly, the examples of utterance-initial *please* in declaratives in (6a) and (6b) uniquely appear in written contexts and share some particular characteristics. Firstly, they are both literary representations of speech. Secondly, *please* in these sentences is not integrated into the syntax of the declarative clause. This is indicated by the comma punctuation, though this is not a wholly reliable way of determining whether or not something is syntactically integrated; topics and foci in English, for example, are often separated from the rest of the clause by a prosodic break. However, *please* in these contexts is not directly linked to the statement made but seems to be elliptical; for (6a), for example, we could imagine underlying structures as in (8).

(8)   a.   Please ~~spare him~~, he's my son.
       b.   Please ~~listen to my plea~~, he's my son.

The analysis of standalone *please* as an elliptical structure also accounts for the possible readings identified in examples (3a) and (4a), reanalysed here in (9).

(9)   a.   ~~Yes I'll have a drink~~ please - I'll have a beer.
       b.   Please ~~help~~ - there's a mouse over there.

This kind of ellipsis can be accounted for using an analysis such as that proposed in Weir (2014), in which the antecedent for the ellipsis is the Question Under Discussion (QUD). (9b) is a simple case of clausal ellipsis in which the QUD is something like *What do you need?* (9a) is more complicated. It is compatible with a QUD antecedent such as *Would you like something to drink?* that might actually be overt, or could be indicated with a gesture such as raising an invisible glass to the mouth. I assume that *please* here is clause-final and is base-generated low in the clause (see section 3.3 for details) and is fronted via some kind of focus movement (in the vein of Weir (2015)), followed by ellipsis of the TP. However, as standalone *please* is not the focus of this article, I will leave the details of this analysis for future work.

   Given a standalone analysis of the examples in (6a) and (6b) and similar cases, we do not see any examples of syntactically-integrated *please* in sentence-initial position in declarative clauses.

   To summarise, examples of *please* in written declaratives are all found in literary examples of direct speech and constitute separate acts from the declarative they appear with. Amongst the examples of *please* in spoken declaratives, all four examples of *please* are clause-final. It therefore appears that clause-initial *please* is strongly restricted to imperatives and interrogatives. *Please* may also appear before both these clause types and declarative clauses if it is a 'standalone' *please* that is distinguished from the following clause both by prosody and in its structure, as standalone *please* is an elliptical structure with its own propositional content.

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refer to 'responses to questions' in the most literal overt sense.

2.2.   (Other) characteristics of 'please'

In addition to its clausal position and the type of clause it may occur in, the distribution of *please* is restricted in other ways.

2.2.1.   Embedded contexts

Please is restricted in embedded contexts: we find examples like (10) where a mental state report is used to make an indirect request and contains clause-medial *please*, but *please* in reported speech like (11) is ungrammatical.

(10)   I wonder if someone might please check the books.   ICE-GB

(11)   He asked me (*please) whether (*please) I would (*please) go to the dance with him.

However, *please* is permitted in embedded clauses in which the centre of evaluation (to use Speas & Tenny's (2003) term) has shifted from the speaker, for example in free indirect discourse examples such as (12). Furthermore, dialects that have independently been shown to embed full illocutionary acts permit *please* in these contexts. An example is the embedded inverted question (EIQ) shown in (13), which is found in a number of English dialects and permit *please* as illustrated in (14).[6]

(12)   She asked if she might see a hand-mirror please.   ICE-GB

(13)   a.   He asked me would I go to the dance with him.
         b.   *He asked me whether would I go to the dance with him.

(14)   a.   He asked me please would I go to the dance with him.
         b.   He asked me would I please go to the dance with him.
         c.   *He asked me whether please would I go to the dance with him.
         d.   *He asked me whether would I please go to the dance with him.   North West Eng.

2.2.2.   Modification

Unlike adverbs but like functional heads, *please* cannot be modified, as (15) shows.

(15)   a.   *Very please. (cf. [OK]very kindly)
         b.   *Hugely please. (cf. [OK]hugely grateful)
         c.   *Many please. (cf. [OK]many thanks)

However, *please* can apparently be modified by a less common intensifier, *pretty*, also exemplified in its more usual usage in (16).

(16)   a.   Pretty please!
         b.   That's pretty impressive.

What is interesting is that intensifier *pretty* in *pretty please* does not act exactly like the *pretty*

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[6]See McCloskey (2006), Krifka (2014), Woods (2014, in press) for more information on this phenomenon.

in "That's pretty impressive". Where *pretty* attenuates the adjective in the latter, there is no attenuation in *pretty please*. Neither does *pretty please* denote a 'prettier' *please* than standalone *please*, though there seems to be more of a sense of charm and persuasion—related to the root meaning of *pretty*—attached to *pretty please* than in "That's pretty impressive." It is also not possible to modify *please* with any other adverbial that is similar to *pretty*, as (17) illustrates.

(17)   a.   *Beautiful please.
        b.   *Charming please.

Moreover, *pretty please* has a restricted distribution too: in the British National Corpus[7], it appears only three times and always as a standalone utterance.

Although *pretty* is an intensifier and can combine with *please*, the facts that it intensifies *please* differently from adjectives like *impressive*, retains more of its root meaning and has a restricted distribution suggest that *pretty please* is an idiom, possibly brought about by combining the two meanings of the lexeme *pretty*.

2.2.3.   Co-ordination

Adverbs can typically be stacked or co-ordinated, where functional heads in the same projection cannot. This is illustrated using German discourse particles in (18) and in English in (19).

(18)   *gehen Sie doch und mal zum   Arzt.
        go   you PRT and PRT to.the doctor
        "Go to the doctors!"   Coniglio (2005:30)

(19)   *Please and fine, fetch me the bucket.

2.2.4.   Are all interrogatives equal?

Not all interrogative clauses naturally co-occur with *please*. This is shown below in (20), in which information-seeking questions that cannot be construed as requests are incompatible with clause-initial *please*.

(20)   a.   Please will you find me a partner?
        b.   Please can you persuade him to come?
        c.   *Please did you get that dress at Macy's?
        d.   *Please where did you get that dress?   Sadock (1974)

Sadock (1974) claims that there is no difference in *meaning* between examples like (20a), a polar interrogative with a modal auxiliary, and (20c), a polar interrogative with do-support, that should make them more or less appropriate with regards to *please*. He illustrates what he means by 'a difference in meaning' using examples such as (21).

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[7]Examples of usage taken from the British National Corpus (BNC) were obtained under the terms of the BNC End User Licence. Copyright in the individual texts cited resides with the original IPR holders. For information and licensing conditions relating to the BNC, please see the web site at `http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk`.

(21)   a.   Feed the cat.
        b.   Feed the dog.

In the case that you only have a cat, telling me to feed the dog is inappropriate due to the meaning of the constituent parts of the sentence. Sadock argues that this is not the case with (20a) and (20c) because a context could be constructed in which (20c) too is grammatical. However, it may be argued that this is not the case - the *structure* of the sentence must change to make (20c) grammatical, as (22) illustrates.

(22)   *Context: A really wants to know where B got the dress because owning the dress will make A's life immeasurably happier, but B is refusing to tell A where the dress came from. A resorts to guessing.*

        A: *Please* - did you get the dress in Macy's?

In (22), the *please* used is actually of the standalone kind that can make requests in and of itself (cf. Sadock (1974:89) and section 2.1.3). Therefore, while it should be able to combine with the information-seeking question in (20c) if clause-type alone matters, it is actually already associated with a different type of content that has been elided. Some possible underlying structures for (20c) are shown in (23). The correct structure depends on the context in which (20c) is uttered.

(23)   a.   Please ~~tell me~~ - did you get the dress in Macy's?
        b.   Please ~~stop teasing me~~ - did you get the dress in Macy's?
        c.   Please ~~will you tell me the answer~~ - did you get the dress in Macy's?

The data above show that syntactically-integrated clause-initial *please* is only compatible with polar questions with modal force. Often, the speaker is coreferential with a benefactive argument, either overtly (as in (20a)) or covertly (as in (20b), though a third-party could also be the benefactive here). Given that the interrogatives in (20a)-(20b), but not other kinds such as those in (20c)-(20d), permit syntactically-integrated clause-initial *please*, a simplistic one-to-one correspondence between clause type and illocutionary force cannot be upheld.

2.3.   Acquisition of 'please'

Given that *please* has a very different distribution depending on whether it is clause-initial or clause-final, it is increasingly attractive to argue that there are two types of syntactically-integrated *please* in English. Assuming Rizzi's (1993) Truncation Hypothesis for first language acquisition, if it can be shown that one type of *please* is dependent on the acquisition of higher structure, but the other type of *please* is not, this will support the claim that the two types of *please* differ structurally.

It is hypothesised that the clause-initial *please* is dependent on the acquisition of the CP layer, as it is proposed to be generated in a projection above CP. In contrast, clause-final *please* is hypothesised to be an adverbial and so will not be dependent on CP having been acquired in order for the child to use it.

This diagnostic is not available for the analysis of other proposed illocutionary heads such as Romanian discourse markers like *hai*, because *hai* exclusively appears clause-initially or as a standalone marker and as such the acquisition of high functional head *hai* cannot be distinguished from any other potential type of *hai*.

As the successful acquisition of CP is crucial for the proper formation of questions in English, I will compare the children's use of clause-initial *please*[8] with their use of full adult-like questions.

It is not surprising to find that *please* occurs very early on in children's speech. There is a lot of support for the use of *please* as a politeness strategy by caregivers. This is illustrated in (24) from from the Manchester corpus (Theakston et al. 2001) in the CHILDES database (MacWhinney 2000).

(24)   Aran (2;3)
        MOT: well if you want somebody to do something what do
    you say ?
    CHI: please
    MOT: oh good
    MOT: I'm glad you know that

Taking the first three subcorpora of the Manchester corpus (Anne, Aran and Becky), there were 324 uses of *please* by the children. As expected, *please* is used by the children from the earliest files (around age 1;10). Use of *please* is often prompted by the caregiver, either as a standalone fragment or with other fragments like *yes* or NPs such as *that*. These uses of *please* are exclusively utterance-final.

Clause-initial integrated uses of *please* emerge later and always contain (at least) a verb, as illustrated in table 5.

Table 5: First uses of sentence-initial *please*

Child	Age	Utterance
Anne	2;2	please [can I] have some
Aran	2;4	please race it mummy
Becky	2;6	please take the card off please

At no point in the corpora are there are any examples of utterance-initial *please* with fragments, NPs or declarative clauses in any of the children's speech. Furthermore, in all cases, utterance-initial *please* occurs after or around the same time as the child has acquired CP. I have taken a particularly strict approach to determining the age of acquisition of CP as the age at which the child analysed wh-questions with inversion of a full auxiliary. The ages of acquisition of CP and first use of utterance-initial *please* are detailed in table 6.

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[8]The corpus I have used is implicitly coded for prosody, as separate utterances are recorded on separate lines. This includes successive utterances by one speaker that are considered to be separate but that are not separated by utterances by another speaker, for example the mother's utterances (MOT) in (24). I have therefore assumed that utterance-initial *please* is integrated with the clause following it if it appears on the same line in the transcript. If it appears on a different line, I have considered it to be a case of standalone *please*.

Table 6: Children's first evidence of CP compared with age of first use of utterance-initial *please*

Child	Age of U-I *please*	Age of acquisition of CP	First evidence of CP
Anne	2;2	1;11	what did you do/where are moneys please
Aran	2;4	2;5	what is this one[9]
Becky	2;6	2;2	what is that

It seems therefore that children must have acquired CP before they can use *please* in non-clause-final positions, suggesting that the specific functional position for this kind of *please* is also not acquired until this point. It also seems that the children are aware of the restricted use of clause-initial *please* as they only ever use it with true direct requests.

3.   Is 'please' an illocutionary head?

The evidence presented so far suggests that there are two clear types of syntactically-integrated *please*: clause-initial *please*, whose distribution is restricted to prototypical requesting clauses and is acquired later; and clause-final *please*, which has a wider distribution and is less tied to requesting clauses. Clause-medial *please* is a slightly more complex case that will be shown to be a variant of clause-initial *please*. The next challenge is to determine how each type of *please* fits into the structure and integrates with the rest of the clause.

3.1.   Clause-initial 'please'

The evidence above seems to suggest that clause-initial *please* is a head marking illocutionary force. It occupies a high position in the clause, which is to say it precedes everything else in the clause and, if it may be embedded, it is incompatible with overt complementisers as in (14). It is not only clausal position but other characteristics of *please* that suggest that it is a high functional head; clause-initial *please* fits many of the criteria proposed by Cardinaletti (2011) and Haegeman (2014) for high functional heads. *Please* is derived from a verbal root (though it itself does not inflect). It may not be modified nor may it be coordinated with other similar elements. It is not truth-conditional but does contribute to the interpretation of the sentence. Its contribution is to communicate something about the intentions of the speaker in making that utterance and, as will shortly be shown, it also restricts clauses to a request interpretation, even if another or several other types of force are usually compatible with that clause.

Moreover, the type of clause *please* may appear with is directly related to the requirements it places on the addressee. It has been shown that clause-initial *please* is restricted to polar interrogatives and imperatives; that is, forms used to express direct requests. Furthermore, in his discussion of the three main clause types, Portner (2004) proposes that interrogatives and imperatives differ from declaratives in that the 'centre of evaluation' is the addressee, not the

speaker.

3.1.1. *The structure and semantics of clause-initial 'please'*

Following an amended version of the speech act phrase structure proposed by Hill (2007), the proposed structure for a sentence like (25a) is shown in (25b). Note that I label 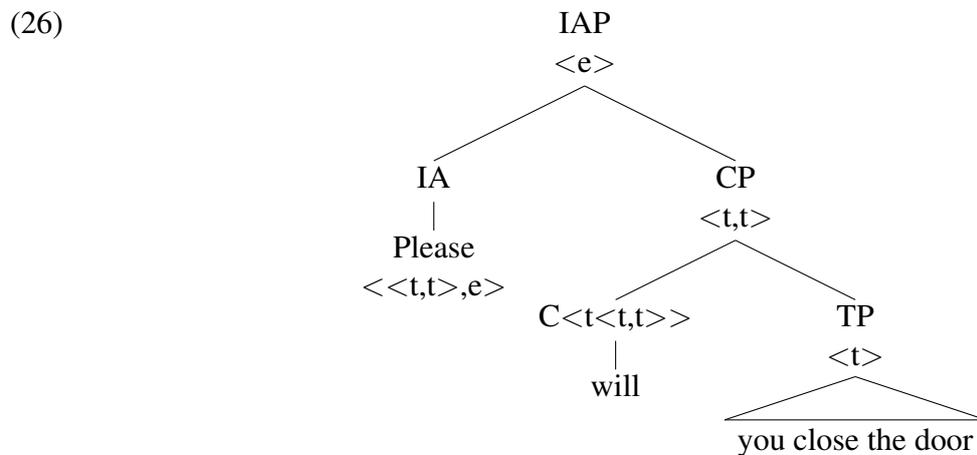the projection that *please* is the head of as the Illocutionary Act Phrase (IAP) in line with Krifka (2014) to avoid confusion of this syntactic structure with pragmatically-determined speech acts (see also Woods (in press)).

(25)   a.   Please will you close the door?
       b.

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                                IAP
                   ┌─────────────┴──────────────────┐
            CENTRE OF                               IA'
            EVALUATION                    ┌──────────┴────────────┐
            (ADDRESSEE)                   IA                      CP
                                    ⟨Force:Request⟩        ┌───────┴────────┐
                                          │                C               TP
                                        Please           ⟨uQ⟩         ┌─────┴──────┐
                                                   ⟨Type:Interrogative⟩  you close the door
                                                          │
                                                         will
```
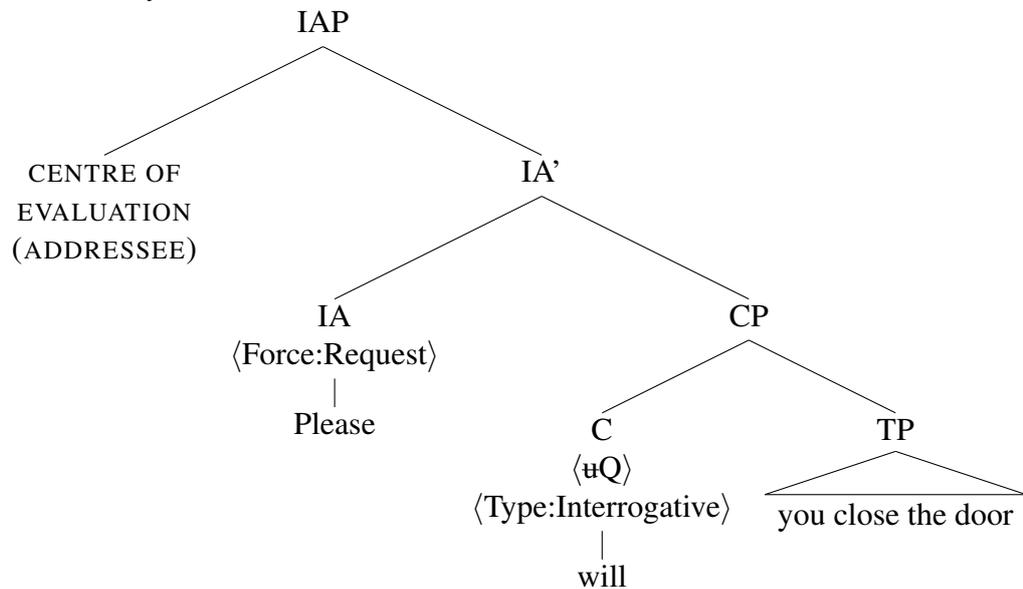
Abstracting away from the role of the CENTRE OF EVALUATION, which is to apply the relevant context to the content of the CP, I propose that the semantic types of the elements in (25b) are as shown in (26).

(26)

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                          IAP
                          <e>
              ┌────────────┴────────────┐
              IA                         CP
              │                        <t,t>
            Please             ┌──────────┴─────────┐
          <<t,t>,e>       C<t<t,t>>                 TP
                              │                     <t>
                            will               ┌─────┴──────┐
                                           you close the door
```

The logic of this is as follows: the type for questions is a set of truth values $<t,t>$[10], which is taken by the IA head *please* as input to return an entity, namely the utterance *Please will you close the door*. There are a number of reasons to believe that the utterance (question plus overt illocutionary force) is an entity: firstly, utterances—whether information-seeking questions, statements, requests, or something else—are referred to using demonstrative pronouns, as noted by Davidson (1979) and demonstrated in (27).

(27)   a.   That is not what I requested.
                    (i) "Please would you close the door" is what I requested.
                    (ii) That you would close the door is what I requested.[11]
         b.   I requested that.
                    (i) I requested, "Please would you close the door."
                    (ii) I requested that you would close the door.
                    (iii) %I requested would you please close the door.

Secondly, Roberts (2012:15) considers utterances to be semantic entities that constitute conversational moves. These semantic entities retain the information conveyed in the utterance without arguing that their internal structure is maintained in working memory, commensurate with recent psycholinguistic work. Lahiri (2002) also notes that there is a distinction to be made between an embedded question and an embedded question-utterance in Spanish; the latter has its own illocutionary force (of which the evidence is the presence of the quotative complementiser *que*) and is more restricted in its distribution than 'typical' embedded questions.

In fact, the proposal made in (26) is very similar to that made by Lahiri (2002) for the Spanish question-utterances: he proposes that there is a type coercion rule that lifts expressions of type $<s,t>$, that is propositions, to utterances (a type of entity). I do not think that the role of *please* is to *coerce* a question into an utterance entity because this is simply the canonical, not some ancillary or secondary, use of clause-initial *please*. However, I suggest that the same kind of logic applies, whereby the input to the function denoted by the IA head *please* can be either a question of type $<t,t>$ or an imperative of type $<e,t>$[12].

The mechanism is as follows: assuming flexible types, *please* takes an argument S of a complex type $<\sigma,t>$. It then returns the unique utterance u such that u is mapped onto S, where the propositional content of u and S are identical.[13] The utterance that results is then checked against the relevant discourse context at the next stage (through the centre of evaluation, see Woods (forthcoming) for further details). The utterance u that is returned is of type e.

That the expression $<\sigma,t>$ is the input of the function denoted by *please* is important as it accounts for the incompatibility of integrated clause-initial *please* with declarative utterances.

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[10]See Cable (2007: section 2.7) for an in-detail examination of the compositional extensional semantics of questions; as already noted here, I abstract away from the question of extensions here.

[11]Note that a true utterance with its own illocutionary force is not possible in sentence initial position (Moulton 2015; Woods forthcoming), hence the presence of the complementiser *that* and the lack of subject-auxiliary inversion. Moreover, the fact that the declarative complementiser *that* rather than the interrogative complementiser *whether* appears here is indicative of the difference between a request and a true information-seeking question.

[12]Here I follow Portner's (2004) proposal that imperatives are properties, though I will not go into the finer structural details in this paper.

[13]Thanks to Norman Yeo for clarifying my thinking here.

Both questions and imperatives are of types that may serve as input to the function denoted by *please* but a declarative, which is a proposition of type t, is of the wrong semantic type. Hence when *please* is inserted into a declarative, a semantic clash occurs and interpretation fails.

Other interpretive properties of integrated clause-initial *please* are also accounted for by the structure in (25b). For example, the fact of *please*'s being the illocutionary act head and encoding illocutionary force explains why it is available in dialects that embed illocutionary acts and not those that do not. For example, embedded clauses in standard English are generally assumed to be clause-typed but unspecified for illocutionary force (read: the original speaker's intentions). Following Krifka's (2014) and Woods's (2014; in press) arguments for embedded illocutionary acts, the postulation of an extra layer of structure that bestows illocutionary force on the embedded clause explains the permissibility of *please* in embedded inverted interrogatives like those in (14).

Moreover, the fact that *please* encodes a specific type of illocutionary force is most clearly illustrated by a triad of examples from Sadock (1974). According to the theory sketched above, only (28c) is overtly marked for illocutionary force. In fact, while examples (28a) and (28b) could be genuine information-seeking questions about the addressee's ability to close the window, example (28c) can only be interpreted as a request.

(28)   a.   Can you close the window?
        b.   Can you close the window, please?
        c.   Please can you close the window?

3.1.2.   *Clause-initial 'please' is not a politeness marker*

Having established that *please* is a marker of requesting force, the question of its relationship to politeness cannot be ignored. Sadock (1974) noted that syntactically-integrated *please* in clause-initial position has the effect of softening a request. This is particularly clear in (29); clause-initial *please* can be used in non-polite contexts and seems to attenuate the non-polite utterance; it is possible to interpret *please* in (29a) and (29b) as expressing emotions such as exasperation and resignation rather than just intent to insult. In contrast, clause-final *please* in the same contexts is degraded because it is more directly associated with politeness.

(29)   a.   Please fuck off.
        b.   Please can you fuck off?
        c.   ??Fuck off please.
        d.   ??Can you fuck off please?

I propose that clause-initial *please* introduces a conversational implicature[14] of attenuation precisely because of its main role as a request marker. The use of *please* in (29a) means that this form of the utterance is in competition with the bare form of the utterance, given that there is no antonym for *please*. Following Gricean reasoning, the result of the competition between the bare form and the form in (29a) is not that the imperative *fuck off* loses its basic meaning that the speaker wishes the addressee to leave and wishes to insult the addressee; in fact, a sense of

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[14]Thanks to Eric McCready and George Tsoulas for help with this.

obligation is imposed on the addressee to fulfil the former wish that s/he leave. That is to say that the choice by the speaker to use *please* results in a sense of attenuation of the impolite force of the imperative *fuck off* precisely because the wish of the speaker that the addressee leave is foregrounded by the presence of *please*. This is as a result of applying the maxim of manner; on the assumption that the speaker does not wish to contradict herself by being both rude and polite, she must wish to highlight her remark as a request rather than as a simply insulting remark.

As this implicature is proposed to be a conversational implicature, it should be both rein-forceable and cancellable:[15] this can be shown to be the case in (30) and (31) respectively.

(30)   Please fuck off - look, I don't mean to be rude, but I just can't deal with your presence right now.   *Reinforcement*

(31)   Please fuck off, and don't you dare show your ugly face around here again.
                                                                                Cancellability

Where the bare form *fuck off* may not necessarily be used in a situation in which the speaker wants to addressee to physically leave, (29a) requires such a situation. It is this shift in weight accorded to each part of the meaning of *fuck off* triggered by *please* that results in the attenua-tion of the impoliteness of the bare form.

3.1.3.   Summary

The analysis in this section concludes that clause-initial *please* is the head of the Illocutionary Act Phrase, the highest projection in the clausal spine. It encodes requesting force and takes clauses of complex types as input and returns an utterance of type e. In this way it is incom-patible with declarative clauses, which are of the simplex type t. This also accounts for the unembeddability of clause-initial *please*, except in those dialects that permit the embedding of illocutionary acts, such as North West England English. Illocutionary act head *please* is ac-ceptable in non-polite contexts and as such is not a marker of politeness, but its inclusion in non-polite contexts gives rise to an implicature of attenuation because it foregrounds the obli-gations it places on the addressee regarding the request it marks over any impolite content.

3.2.   Clause-medial 'please'

Although clause-medial *please* still seems to be restricted to requests, it has a slightly wider distribution than clause-initial *please*; in particular it can occur in declaratives with deontic modal force expressing necessity: the examples in (32) are attested.

(32)   a.   Persons anxious to write their names will please do so on this stone only.[16]
        b.   Ladies must please remain fully dressed while bathing.[17]

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[15]Thanks again to Imke Driemel for reminding me of this.

[16]Taken from `www.reddit.com/r/funny/comments/2gr9ol/a_very_british_response_to_graffiti/` - thanks to Jason Overfelt for sharing this.

[17]Taken from `http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g297637-i214`

There are almost no examples of clause-medial *please* with a modal force expressing possibility: no examples were found in which modal verb *may* or *might* co-occur with *please* in a declarative clause.

This is an interesting restriction on the use of clause-medial *please* that does not apply to clause-final *please* (see (12), amongst other examples), nor to clause-initial and -medial *please* in other non-declarative clause types.

Clause-medial *please* is like clause-final *please* in that it is common in situations with set conventions, such as letter writing as in (33), or when there is a notable disparity in seniority between the interlocutors in (the attested but controversial) example (34) (in this case the disparity in authority between religious leaders and the faithful).

(33)   Will you please acknowledge receipt of this letter by signing and returning the duplicate copy to me?[18]

(34)   Women should please walk along this side of the road only.[19]

However, clause-medial *please* shares its interpretive properties with clause-initial *please*. As in (32), it is common in situations in which an (often socially necessary) expression of politeness may seem forced, born of frustration, or even sarcastic, for example in the situation in (35).

(35)   I've asked you several times to see a doctor - will you *please* just make an appointment?

Clause-medial *please* also has an impact on the meaning of the sentence insofar as it restricts the interpretation of the sentence to that of a request. This is illustrated for interrogatives in (36) and for declaratives in (37).

(36)   a.   Can you open the window?   *Request or information-seeking question*
        b.   Can you please open the window?   *Request only*

(37)   a.   Visitors will leave shoes at the door.   *Statement or request*
        b.   Visitors will please leave shoes at the door.   *Request only*

Although (37a) is more likely to be read as a request given that the reader must comply with the request for the proposition in the statement to be rendered true, the presence of *please* in (37b) makes it clear that the sentence is to be read as a request and comes with the kind of attenuating effect explained at the end of section 3.1.

Syntactically, the position of clause-medial *please* is fixed and is commensurate with the position in other languages of non-clause-initial items that express discourse relations. Clause-medial *please* is located on the edge of the vP above vP-edge adverbs like *always*, as in (38), or negation, as in (39).

(38)   Parents should please always refrain from congregating inside the front entrance or on

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53673-Thiruvananthapuram_Trivandrum_Kerala.html.

[18]This example is taken from https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/contracts/notification.doc.

[19]This example is taken from http://www.standard.co.uk/incoming/article9744071.ece/alternates/w620/womenposter1.jpg

the benches in front of the office area during arrival and dismissal times.[20]

(39)   Tell him that you're sorry, but he will have to wait in line like everyone else, and he
        should please not ask for special treatment.   Schaar (1981:169)

It appears therefore that clause-medial *please* is a functional head like clause-initial *please* that
has been adopted into certain social conventions. Its position high above vP is fixed in the
clause, and there are some accounts of Mittelfeld particles that suggest that there is a discourse
projection above vP like the one proposed in (25b) above CP (see for example Struckmeier
(2014)).

It therefore seems that an analysis of clause-medial *please* following Struckmeier (2014)
may capture both the discourse-related properties and also the wider distribution of clause-
medial please with respect to the clause types in which it can appear. Clause-medial *please* is
compatible with a wider range of clause types because only a subset of features on the heads in
the C layer, in particular the IA head and Force, are spelled out in the Mittelfeld. It is proposed
that in English, only the features of the IA head, and not those of the clause-typing Force head,
are spelled out in the Mittelfeld. This may be different from the German situation described
by Struckmeier, as he notes that some sentences can actually become degraded if the discourse
particle is omitted, as (40) shows.

(40)   Wäre   ich ?(doch) Millionär!
        Were.SUBJ.II I   PRT   millionaire
        "If only I were a millionaire!"   Struckmeier (2014:30)

As this is not the case in English, it is suggested that the featural link between clause type and
the Mittelfeld particle is present in German but not in English.

Moreover, the fact that *please* only combines with complex types accounts for the way in
which it can combine with substructures within TP; the type of a VP, namely $\langle e,t \rangle$ is a valid
input for *please*. However, if clause-medial *please* is exactly the same as clause-initial *please*, a
type-crash will occur, as *please*'s output is of type e where the required output to compose the
VP plus *please* with the remaining structure will be type $\langle e,t \rangle$.

I will claim here that clause-medial *please* is a slightly different function than clause-final
please: it is not a sentence-level function that takes a clause and returns an utterance, but that it is
a predicate-level function that modifies only the predicate, taking the predicate as its input and
returning another modified predicate. It is clear that such predicate-level functions exist; the
German discourse predicates examined by Struckmeier, for instance, may only occur clause-
medially but are under the same kind of restrictions as clause-initial elements. This approach
also accounts for the unavailability of clause-medial *please* with modal forces that cannot be
interpreted as expressing necessity.[21] Clause-medial *please* marks the predicate as being a re-
quest, so combining a predicate with requesting force with a modal that expresses a force other
than obligation causes a crash in interpretation—in short, contradictory modal forces cannot

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[20]Taken from `http://www.framingham.k12.ma.us_mccarthy_documents_StudentHandbook
2013.pdf`.

[21]Imke Driemel (p.c.) points out that in German the insertion of *bitte* ('please') into a sentence with a deontic
possibility modal forces it to switch to a necessity reading. This is the case in English as well.

combine.

On the account proposed here, clause-medial *please* is a predicate-level version of the clause-level *please* outlined in the previous section 3.1. It modifies predicates to mark them as the core of a request, meaning that it can occur in only those declaratives that have the same modal force as a request; namely, declaratives that impose an obligation on their addressee.

3.3. Clause-final 'please'

It is clear that there is a clause-final *please* that behaves very differently from clause-initial and clause-medial *please*. Clause-final *please* has a much wider distribution than clause-initial *please*. It may occur with polar interrogatives and imperatives, but also with fragments such as 'yes' or standalone NPs, with declaratives such as those uttered as responses to questions, and with overt performative requests. It is also possible in non-speech act embedded contexts, such as (41) and with wh-questions, as in (42).

(41)   I wonder if someone might please check the books.[22]   ICE-GB

(42)   Johnny, who discovered the Bronx, please?   Sadock (1974:121)

Clause-final *please* differs interpretively too. Examples like (29) have already illustrated that clause-final *please* is much more closely linked with politeness contexts. This is also noted by Sato (2008) in her analysis of *please* in American and New Zealand English corpora. It is also exemplified by the kinds of contexts in which only clause-final *please* can appear: responses to (overt) questions and indirect requests are much more heavily marked by context and subtext. Furthermore, the ICE-GB corpus data also show that clause-final *please* is less common with requesting strategies that tend to imply obligation, such as imperatives. Finally, it is clear that it is not only politeness that regulates the acceptability for *please*; its distribution in fragments suggests that some other factor is also at play. While "Yes please" is very common, "No please" as a single intonational phrase is odd to native-speaker ears.[23] This is clearly not due to politeness; there are many contexts in which a polite refusal may be required, contexts that are usually satisfied by "No thank you". Nor is it a direct result of refusal *per se*; it is possible to refuse while still using *please*, as in (43).

(43)   A: Would you like a new fountain pen?
        B: I think I'll just stick to my old one, *please*/thanks.

Please is perfectly acceptable in B's refusal and is most likely to occur in a situation where B is subordinate to A or has less authority in some way. What is more, it appears to be interchangeable with *thanks* in (43), while it clearly is not in the examples in (44).

(44)   a.   I don't want a drink, *please.

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[22]Note that this is not a counterexample to the discussion of modal force and clause-medial *please* in the previous section, as the embedded clause here is an interrogative and is marked as such despite the lack of subject-auxiliary inversion.

[23]Thanks to Jon Ander Mendia for this observation.

    b.   No, *please.

    c.   Won't you leave the door open, *please.

    d.   Patrons will (please) not walk on the grass (*please).

A tentative proposal that *please* is a positive polarity item (PPI) that is incompatible with negation. Note that if *please* is above the scope of negation it is available (as in the first *please* in (44d)) but not if it is scoped over by negation (as the second *please* in (44d) is). This fact helps us determine where clause-final *please* enters the derivation compared with the predicate-level clause-medial *please*. In particular, compare (44c) with the well-known example in (45) below.

(45)   Won't you please, please help me?   Lennon & McCartney (1965)

Unlike (44c), clause-medial *please* is acceptable with the negated modal verb. I propose that this is because clause-medial *please* is generated above negation and is not c-commanded by it in its original position, though negation is later moved with the auxiliary verb into a position above clause-medial *please*. In contrast, clause-final *please* must be generated inside the VP. As a result, it is always c-commanded by negation, leading to ungrammaticality.

For the reasons given in this section, clause-final *please* behaves much more like an adverb-like particle in the vein of Cardinaletti (2011). Adverb-like particles in Cardinaletti's sense do not enter into Agree relationships with any other element in the clause, they are not merged at phase boundaries but much earlier in the derivation—here within VP—and they may appear in a wider range of contexts than particles analysed as functional heads.[24]

The proposal that there are two different types of syntactically-integrated *please*, one that encodes requesting force and one that is an adverbial marking politeness, is neither a stipulative nor a superfluous move. It not only explains different distributions of the different types of *please* but also explains different interpretive effects, which are unlikely to derive simply from a different surface position in the sentence.

4.   *Consequences for speech act theory*

Having provided syntactic and interpretive reasons for the analysis of *please* as a speech act head, it is worth taking a closer look at whether *please* can add anything to the current understanding of what the illocutionary act projection looks like.

Firstly, this analysis of *please* adds weight to Hill's (2007) observation that illocutionary force is syntactically marked in a position above the clause. A method of testing this using *please* takes the paradigm in (28) and applies it to a different clause type. The postulation of *please* as an overt marker of requesting force predicts that when *please* appears in imperatives, that the clause will only be interpretable with requesting force, and not with the permissive

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[24]An anonymous reviewer asks if this analysis of clause-final *please* predicts that it should be able to be modified, unlike clause-initial *please*. I argue that it does not, as not all adverbial elements are modifiable—not only the particles Cardinaletti identifies, but also clausal adverbials, for example. However, the sentence-final distribution of 'pretty please', as detailed in 2.2.2, is suggestive of the fact that clause-final *please* is adverbial in a way that clause-initial *please* is not.

interpretation often available in imperatives.[25] This prediction is tested in (46).

(46)   a.   Take a seat.
          b.   Take a seat, please.
          c.   Please take a seat.

Whilst the paradigm is not as striking as in (28), there is a sense in which (46b) is a suggestion or an expression of permission where (46c) is a request with some sense of obligation on the part of the addressee. This interpretation requires more investigation, perhaps from an experimental point of view.

However, whilst there is a clear relationship between illocutionary act head and illocutionary force, the data above suggest that there is not such a clear relationship between the illocutionary act head and clause type. It is worth, therefore, reviewing the proposal by Coniglio & Zegrean (2012) that C is split into illocutionary force and clause type projections separately from the particle. The original formulation of their proposal is shown in (47).

(47)   ILL [ʉtype] [val]/[*i*intent] [val] ⟵ intentionality valued
          CLAUSE TYPE [*i*type] [val] ⟵ clause type valued
            PRT [ʉtype] [val]/[ʉintent] [val]   Coniglio & Zegrean 2012:249

However, rather than postulating three separate heads, I propose an alteration whereby the particle is the head of the illocutionary force projection and that its role is to mark the illocutionary force of the sentence overtly (as outlined above). Furthermore, particles are not linked to clause type through feature sharing; the relationship is a matter of semantic composition as expressed in (26). This is only a small alteration to Coniglio and Zegrean's system, but it is one that streamlines their proposal.

This analysis of *please*, in conjunction with earlier work, may also begin to clarify the nature of the arguments of the speech act head. There appears to be a correlation between the availability of an overt speech act marker and the addressee being the centre of evaluation. This is not only true of English *please* but of languages such as German and Romanian, where particles that are available in interrogatives and imperatives pattern together to be unavailable in declaratives (see Coniglio (2009); Struckmeier (2014) for German and Hill (2007) for Romanian). There is also a correlation between the addressee as centre of evaluation with the availability of embedded speech acts in English, as only embedded root interrogatives and imperatives are possible; there do not appear to be any embedded root declaratives in English. The next question to investigate therefore is this: is it possible that this is evidence for (an updated version of) Chomsky's (1995) idea of weak declarative C, at least in English? To provocatively take this one step further - is the speaker ever projected in syntax, or is the addressee the only discourse participant that may be projected in syntax in English (when it is necessary)? It does seem possible (and indeed minimal) that the speaker need not be represented in syntax, as s/he is inalienably connected with the structure by virtue of having produced it, whereas the addressee has no such inalienable connection to the utterance, even in contexts in which there is only one person other than the speaker because the utterance may well be a rhetorical one. To phrase it another way,

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[25]Thanks to Imke Driemel for this observation.

nothing in (English) declarative sentences picks out the specific addressee, though it is important in interrogatives and imperatives that they are addressed to the correct person. This view is at odds with the work on Bavarian German and Canadian English particles conducted by Wiltschko et al. (2015), but these questions must remain for future research.

5.   *Conclusions*

The distributional, interpretive and acquisition data in this paper suggest that there are minimally two types of syntactically-integrated *please* in addition to standalone *please* in English: they are functional head request-marking *please* and adverbial politeness marker *please* respectively. Request-marking head *please* has the following key characteristics: it is clause-initial (with a clause-medial variant) and it only occurs with imperatives and a restricted subset of interrogatives (and declaratives, in the case of clause-medial *please*). It overtly marks the requesting force of the sentence in which it appears and it is usually prosodically part of the clause it gives force to. In contrast, politeness marker *please* occurs clause-finally. It combines with a wider range of clause types, including fragments and declaratives and crucially, rather than marking requesting force, it marks politeness.

There are some important effects of the overt marking of requesting force by request-marking head *please*. This *please* is only possible with direct requests; indirect requests do not have grammatically-marked requesting force, but achieve the effect of a request through other factors such as context and subtext. It has been shown that *please* forces the clause it c-commands to be interpreted as a request and that the relationship between Force and IA head *please* is achieved through semantic composition.

Questions remain, however, over the representation of discourse participants in syntax. It was tentatively suggested that only the addressee is (when necessary) represented and that the speaker is not in syntax but connected with the syntactic structure inalienably (by virtue of being the producer of it), but further development of these ideas has been left for future research.

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