So, of course, get a brain!: two discourse particles in ʔayʔaǰuθəm (Comox-Sliammon)

This talk concerns two discourse particles in ʔayʔaǰuθəm, a Central Salish language. Based on original fieldwork with three speakers, I argue that both discourse particles convey not-at-issue content that relates the utterance to the discourse context, but neither places common ground (CG) restrictions. These findings contribute to the ongoing investigation into the type of content conveyed by discourse particles cross-linguistically (e.g., Zimmermann 2011, Grosz 2020).

The first discourse particle, *ga*, conveys that the prejacent proposition is likely given some salient true proposition in the context. It commonly signals that a proposition follows from some cause or rationale previously asserted.

(1) *Context: Felipe has some seeds out to sprout. After a few days a few have sprouted and are getting big enough to plant. He buys a pot and some soil. Our roommate sees the new pot, so I explain:*

ti=qʷəl	ƛiči̓usəm.	k̓ʷaṅiš	k̓ʷa **ga**	ʔə=tə=k̓ʷihit	tih nəpamin.
cld=come	sprout-face-md	transfer=rpt=dprt		obl=det=increase-stat	big put.in-ins

‘They’ve started to grow so he’s going to plant them in a bigger pot.’

ga is also found as a marker of politeness in questions and imperatives, as in (2). In these cases, it seems to have a ‘softening’ effect (J. Davis 2012), signaling that the question or imperative follows from something in the context and is not abrupt or rude.

(2) *Context: At a store, I want to inquire from one of the workers about something that doesn’t have a price tag.*

k̓ʷin-us=**ga**	tiʔi
how.much-round=dprt	dem

‘How much is this?’

At times, however, the cause or rationale is something salient only to the speaker, as in (3).

(3) *Context: My husband and I are sitting reading, and then I come across a name that is sort of familiar in my book, so out of the blue I ask him (thinking it might be his aunt’s name):*

tam=(**ga**)	kʷ=nan-s	ʔəθ=čapθ
what=dprt	det=name-3poss	2sg.poss=aunt/uncle

‘What is your aunt’s name?’

I therefore analyze *ga* as combining with a speech act to indicate that the speech act is likely given some salient true proposition in the context (4). This captures its role in connecting the utterance to the discourse context without placing restrictions directly on addressee knowledge.

(4) *ga*(ASSERT/Q/REQUEST(φ)) conveys: there is a salient true proposition $\psi \in C$ and ASSERT/Q/REQUEST(φ) is likely given ψ.

The second discourse particle *ʔəyt* conveys that the speaker believes the prejacent proposition should be in the CG. For instance, in Context A of (5), the use of *ʔəyt* is felicitous to indicate to the hearer that he should already know that the speaker does not like black licorice. In contrast, *ʔəyt* is infelicitous in Context B, since the new co-worker cannot be expected to know the likes and dislikes of the speaker.

(5) Context A - ʔəyt is felicitous: *My husband offers me some licorice, and I tell him that I don't like it. He expresses surprise:* łəχsxʷalačxʷʔ! 'Don't you like it?!' *I say:*
Context B - ʔəyt is infelicitous: *A new co-worker asks me if I like black licorice as we're making small talk. I reply:*
łə-sxʷ=čan=**ʔəyt**!
bad-caus=1sg.sbj=dprt
'No, of course I don't like it!

In (6), *ʔəyt* occurs in an imperative to indicate that the addressee should already know to take the specified action, even though it is clear that they are not doing this.

(6) *Context: Talking to someone who can't reach something that's too high on a shelf.*
θukʷ-šin-əm=čxʷ=**ʔəyt**.
step.up.on-foot-md=2sg.sbj=prt
'Use a stool.'
Speaker's comment: It's almost like you're impatient with that person trying to reach something they can't reach, it doesn't make sense they can't figure it out.

I therefore analyze *ʔəyt* as combining with the speech act to indicate that the speaker thinks that the prejacent proposition should be in the CG in assertions (7) and that the request should be in the CG in imperatives (8) (or alternatively added to the addressee's 'to-do' list, as in Portner 2007). This analysis resembles Kratzer and Matthewson's (2009) analysis of German *ja* and S'tá'imcets *qa7*, according to which these indicate that the speaker takes the prejacent to be an established fact.

(7) *ʔəyt*(*ASSERT*(*p*)) conveys: the speaker thinks *p* should already be in the CG

(8) *ʔəyt*(*REQUEST*(*p*)) conveys: the speaker thinks *REQUEST*(*p*) should already be in the CG

Both *ga* and *ʔəyt* then reference the discourse context without placing CG restrictions, consistent with the claim that Salish languages lack CG restrictions (Matthewson 1998, 2005, 2008). Similar observations have been made for German and St'át'imcets discourse particles as well (e.g., Kratzer & Matthewson 2009, Grosz 2020). The content of *ga* and *ʔəyt* is therefore best analyzed in terms of non-Stalnakerian presupposition (e.g., Egg & Zimmermann 2012; Grosz 2020) or use conditions (e.g., Kratzer 1999, Gutzmann 2015). I also observed that the function of *ʔəyt* closely resembles that of German *ja* and St'át'imcets *qa7*, suggesting that these may have shared semantic components likely to be found in discourse particles cross-linguistically.

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