



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

# Missione 4 Istruzione e Ricerca

## 'Mica' as a Modal Particle in Italian: Evidence from Prosody

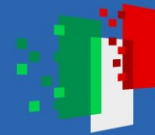
This study was carried out within the **RUM. Rethinking Understanding Modal Particles** and received funding from the European Union Next-GenerationEU - National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) – MISSION 4 COMPONENT 2, INVESTIMENT 1.1 Fondo per il Programma Nazionale di Ricerca e Progetti di Rilevante Interesse Nazionale (PRIN) – CUP N.H53D23004410006



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

# Introduction

- State of the art
  - The pragmatic function of “mica”
  - “mica” as a modal particle (MP) of the German type



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca'Foscari  
Venezia

# Introduction

- Data
  - Corpus KIPARLA (Mauri et al. 2019)
- Investigation (Praat, ToBI):
  - Prosodic status of “mica”



## State of the art

### Pragmatics

- It. mica (lit. “not”)

(1) a. Non vengo a cena da te

I'm not coming to dinner at your place

b. Non vengo **mica** a cena da te

I'm not **mica** coming to dinner at your place



## State of the art

### Pragmatics

(2) **Mica** vengo a cena da te  
**Mica** [I'm coming to dinner at your place]

Presupposition



## State of the art

### Pragmatics

- **Internal vs. Preposed "Mica"**: The pragmatic difference between internal "mica" and preposed "mica" lies in the attribution of the negated presupposition, with each subject to different pragmatic requirements (Cinque 1976; 1991).



## State of the art

### Pragmatics

#### • Cinque (1976; 1991):

- autonomous “mica”: incompatible with “non”, appears in contexts where the presupposition must be attributed to the hearer
- discontinuos “mica”: sentence internal, co-occurs with “non” in contexts where p is not given and attributable to both the hearer and the speaker



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

## State of the art

### Pragmatics

- **Squartini (2017)**: the meaning of “mica” can be defined in terms of old and new information recognizing a mirative function for initial-mica





Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

## State of the art Pragmatics

- **Thaler (2018)**: initial “mica” conveys stronger emotional involvement



## State of the art

### Pragmatics

- **Cerruti (2018; 2020):** CORIS; sentence-internal “mica” can encode the denial of both discourse-old and discourse-new information, whereas initial-mica is found only in the denial of discourse-old information



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

# State of the art Pragmatics

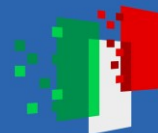
- **Cognola, Moroni (2022): “mica” – “doch nicht”**



## State of the art

### Pragmatics

- **Cognola, Moroni (2022:157):**
- (a) Ich lasse **doch** einen Angehörigen meines Tempelbezirks **nicht** im Stich.
- (b) **Non** posso **mica** abbandonare chi dipende dal mio tempio
  - (Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Der Prozess um des Esels Schatten, cit. in Masi 1996:67)



## State of the art Pragmatics

- **Cognola, Moroni (2022:157):**

- (a) NANDO: Beh, **non** saran **mica** già loro, eh?

- (b) NANDO: Das sind sie **doch** hoffentlich noch **nicht!**?

(Soffritti, 2008:199)



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

## State of the art Pragmatics

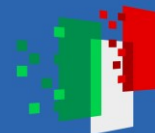
**Cognola, Moroni (2022):** Internal "mica" can introduce new information by selecting and negating a positive presupposition present but not previously explicitly activated in the CG



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

## State of the art Pragmatics

### **Cognola, Moroni (2022):**

- unaccented “doch”: Sachverhalt → new information
- Accented “doch”: Sachverhalt → given information



## State of the art Pragmatics

- **Cognola, Moroni (2022)**: initial "mica" appears only in contexts where the state of affairs is given and immediately retrievable in the communicative situation. In this sense, it operates on an immediately retrievable presupposition





## State of the art

### Pragmatics

- **Cognola, Moroni (2022:162):**
- (a) – Gesù Brigadie', sarebbe che invece di stare in ospedale, non c'era
- - E **mica** ci doveva stare sempre in ospedale
- (b) – Meine Güte, Brigadiere, damit will ich sagen, dass er statt im Krankenhaus, irgendwo war
- - Aber er musste **doch nicht** immer in Krakenhause sein.  
(Die Klagen der Toten, p. 160)



## State of the art

### Pragmatics

- **Magistro (2022)**: experimental results; **initial-mica** denies explicit content when the denied proposition is active or can be immediately activated by implicatures or presuppositions, whereas **clause-internal** mica can appear in rhematic predicates. In these cases, the presupposition can be activated through accommodation by resorting to repair strategies



## State of the art Pragmatics

- **Magistro (2022)**: proposes a parallelism between **preposed “mica”** and **focus fronting**, a syntactic operation available in Standard Italian (Cruschina 2012; Bianchi et al. 2015; Cruschina & Remberger 2017)



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

## State of the art Pragmatics

**Magistro (2022):** internal “mica” encodes a broader contrastive focus, which can become corrective focus if the appropriate conditions are met.

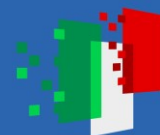


## State of the art

### Pragmatics

- (3) a. I have met  $[[\text{MARINA}]]_{CF}$   
b.  $[[\text{Marina}]]_0 = \text{Marina}$   
c.  $[[\text{Marina}]]_f = \{\text{Marina, Jhon, Kim...}\}$

(Adapted from Magistro 2022:24, ex. 43)



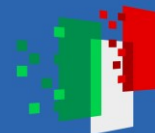
## State of the art

### Pragmatics

(4) A. Mi hanno detto che hai invitato Giulio  
'They told me that you invited Giulio'

B. (MARINA) ho invitato (MARINA).  
'I have invited Marina.'

(Adapted from Magistro 2022:24, ex.13)



## State of the art

### Pragmatics

- (5) a.  $[[p]]_0 = (\text{invite Giulio})$   
b.  $[[p']_0 = (\text{invite Marina})$   
c.  $[[p']_f = \{\text{Marina, Giulio}\}$

(Adapted from Magistro 2022:24, ex.13)



## “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

- **Syntactic evidence** to support the presence of MPs in Italian (Coniglio, 2008; Cognola & Schifano, 2018a, b; Schifano & Cognola, 2020; Cognola & Cruschina, 2021; Cognola & Moroni, 2022; Cognola, Moroni, & Bidese, 2022)





## “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

- Challenging to learn and translate (a.o. Cognola and Moroni, 2022)
- Typically used in spoken language to convey the speaker's subjective perspective on the sentence, thus lexicalising a type of modality (Kratzer 1981). Their omission does not render a sentence ungrammatical but slightly alters its meaning.



# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

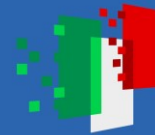
- Scope over the entire sentence
- Interact with clause types
- Produce illocutionary effects by modifying or strengthening the clause's illocution



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

- MPs cannot be topicalized, coordinated, modified, nor can they stand alone as replies to questions.



## “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

- Usually, MPs cannot be stressed, however, at least in some cases, they “can have focus accent or be contrastively stressed” (Coniglio, 2008: footnote 10)



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

- They appear only in root properties clauses (Coniglio 2008; Coniglio and Zagrean 2012).



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

## “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

**MPs are subject to a series of prosodic and syntactic restrictions**, which provide evidence for the claim that they build a separate class from functionally close elements, such as adverbs and discourse markers (Cognola and Moroni 2022).



# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

## Mica (Coniglio 2008):

- **Speaker orientation** suggests it is a modal particle
- **Interaction with illocutionary force:** in declarative sentences, "mica" negates an expectation on the hearer's side; in questions, it strengthens the speaker's expectation of a negative answer, and in imperatives, it implies the speaker's expectation that the hearer would certainly perform an action unless the speaker had instructed him otherwise.



# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

## Mica (Coniglio 2008):

- "mica" has a fixed position within the sentence appearing between habitual adverbs ("usually") and higher repetitive adverbs (e.g. "again") (Cinque, 1999).
- "mica" cannot appear in clauses lacking independent illocutionary force.

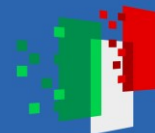




# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

## Mica (Cognola, Moroni 2022):

- MPs are subject to syntactic and prosodic restrictions, which provide further evidence for the claim that they build a separate class from functionally close elements (such as adverbs or discourse markers).
- MPs are always **prosodically integrated**, meaning they cannot form an independent intonation phrase.



# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

**Mica (Cognola, Moroni 2022):**

- (6) a. Non ho mica preso il caffè  
I did not **mica** have coffee
- b. Mica ho preso il caffè  
**mica** I did not have coffee
- c. Non ho preso mica il caffè  
I did not have **mica** coffee



# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

**Mica (Cognola, Moroni 2022):**

- (7) a. \*Non ho, **mica**, preso il caffè  
I did not **mica** have coffee
- b. \***Mica**, ho preso il caffè  
**Mica** I did not have coffee
- c. Non ho preso, **mica**, il caffè  
I did not have **mica** coffee



# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

## Mica (Cognola, Moroni 2022):

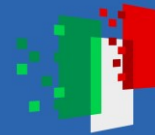
- The fact that an MP is prosodically integrated into all positions constitutes a remarkable fact and provides strong evidence for its status as an MP, given that the prosodically non-integrated option is always available in the competing categories of modal adverbs.



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA

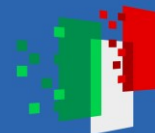


Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

Cross-linguistic studies provide compelling reasons to classify "mica" as an MP.

However, in sentence-initial positions, "mica" seem to exhibit peculiar properties, such as **syntactic positioning** and **narrow scoping abilities**.



## “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian

(6) **Mica MARINA** abbiamo invitato (ma Giulio)

Mica Marina have.1PL invited (but Giulio)

‘We did not invite MARINA (we invited Giulio)!’

**Mica l’abbiamo invitata!**

Mica her-have.1SG invited.F.SG

‘ We have not invited her at all!’

(Adapted from Magistro 2022:3, ex. 3 and 4)



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

# “Mica” as a Modal Particle in Italian: Insights from prosody

- **Objective:** I Investigated the prosodic patterns of the Italian modal particle "MICA/mica" in declarative sentences



# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian: Insights from Prosody

- Data
  - Corpus KIPARLA (Mauri et al. 2019)
- Investigation (Praat software and ToBI transcription):
  - Prosodic status of “mica”
  - 82 occurrences (balanced Internal-mica/preposed-mica)





# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian: Insights from Prosody

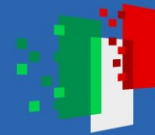
- Data
  - Corpus KIPARLA (Mauri et al. 2019)
    - Spontaneous data
    - Different type of conversations
    - Speaker from various Italian regions



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

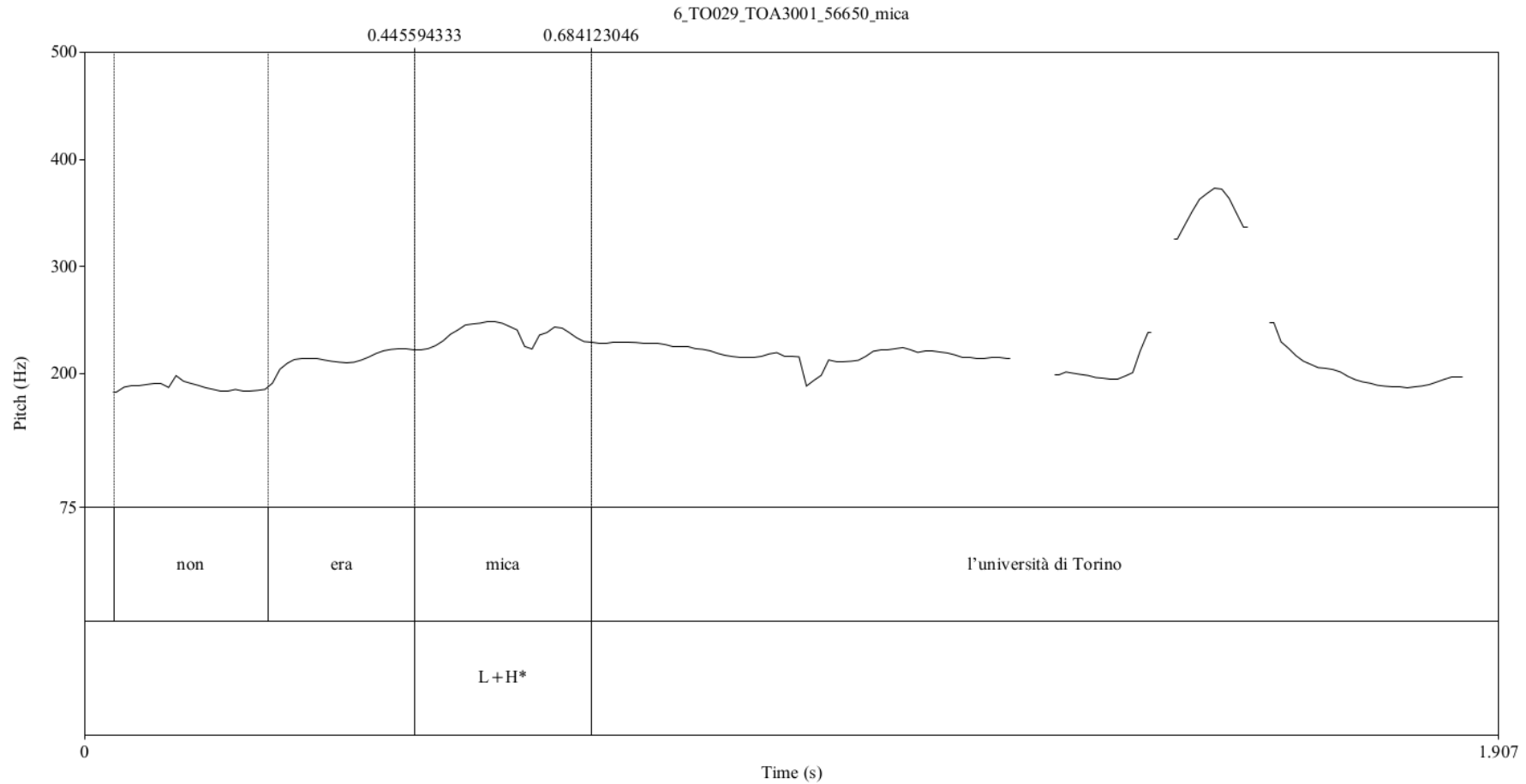
# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian: Insights from Prosody

- Pilot study → Devise an experimental test



# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian Preliminary Observations

- Tone **H\*+L** on "MICA" at the sentence onset and a tone **L+H\*** on "mica" preceded by negation (Tone unit)
- These findings align with the inquiries of Avesani (1995), Crocco et al. (1995), Avesani and Vayra (2002; 2003), and Gili-Fivela and Iraci (2017) on intonational contours in Italian, suggesting that sentence-internal "mica" functions as an instance of **contrastive focus**, while the fronted, sentence-initial MICA serves as an instance of **corrective focus**, a subtype of contrastive focus used to deny or correct a previous assertion or presupposition not shared by the speaker (Cruschina, 2012; Bianchi & Bocci, 2012; Bianchi, Bocci, & Cruschina, 2015, 2016).





Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



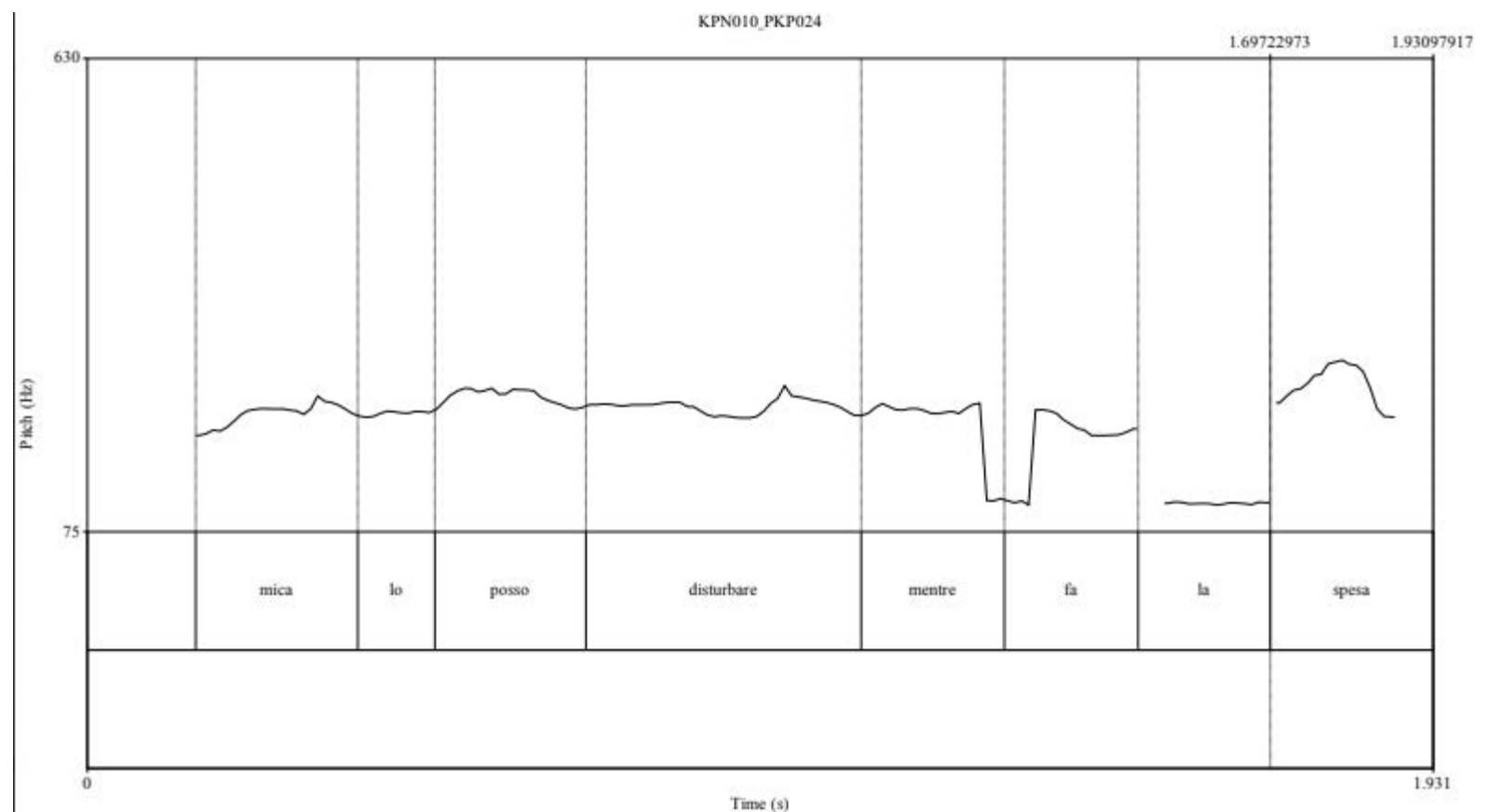
Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia





Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



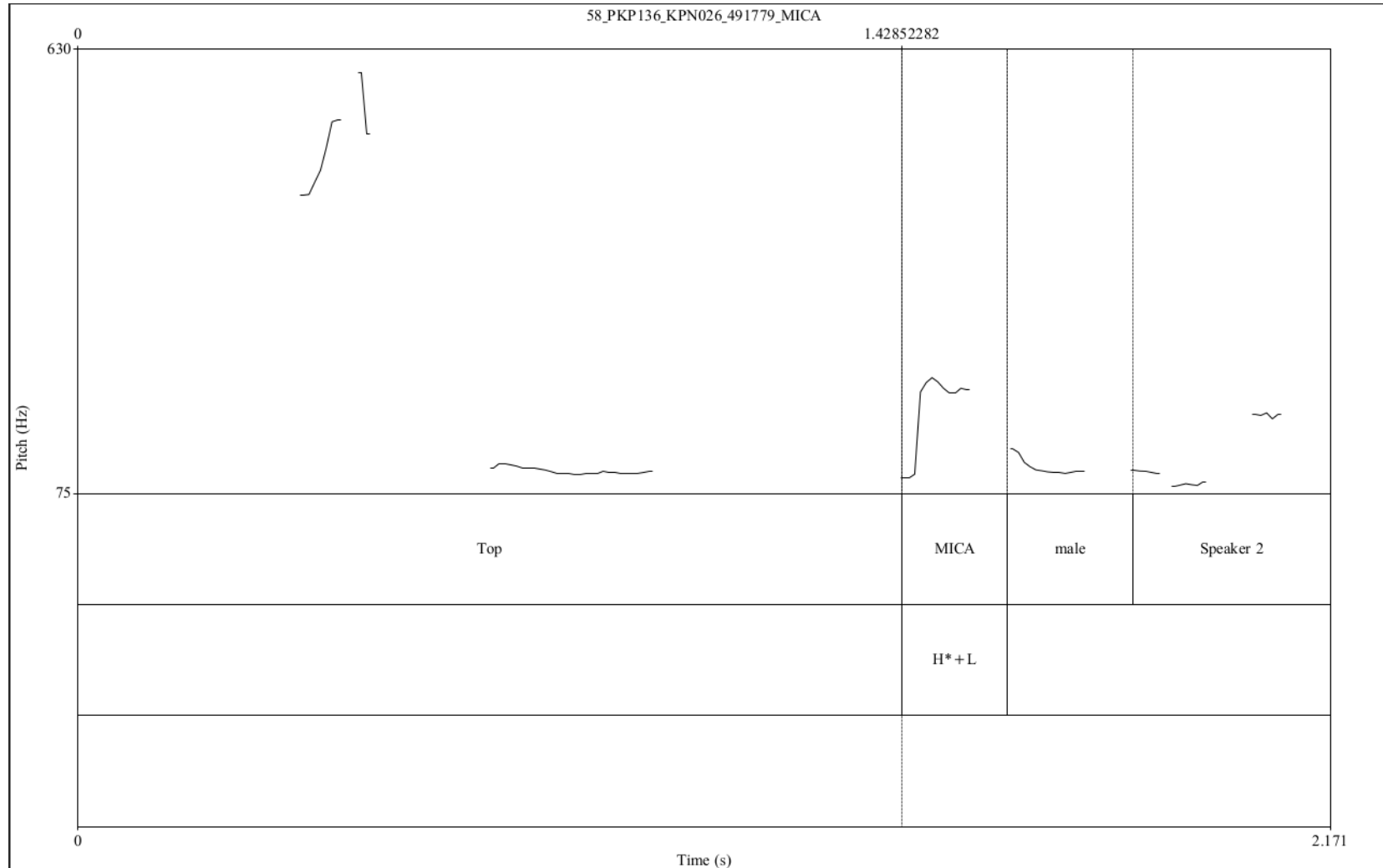
Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

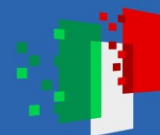




Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



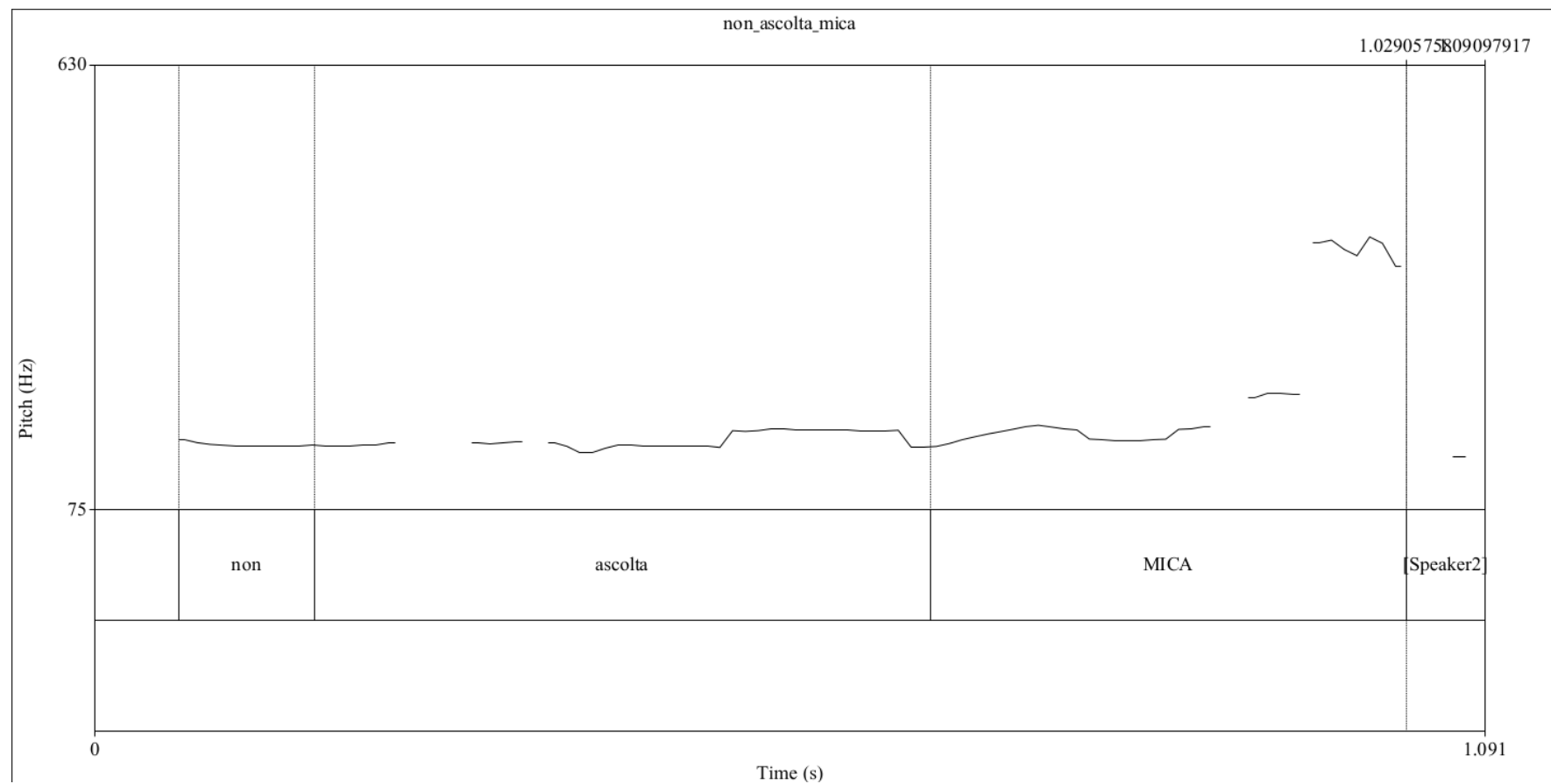
Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia





Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca'Foscari  
Venezia

# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian Preliminary Observations

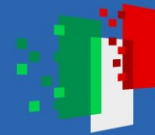
- Italian differs from German in that in Italian every syllable is full, meaning it is a potential candidate for stress or secondary stress (Bertinetto, Bertini, Guidugli 2012)





# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian Preliminary Observations

- **Internal-mica** in Italian is prosodically integrated bearing secondary stress
- **Initial-mica** in Italian is prosodically integrated bearing secondary stress
- **Initial-MICA** can bring sentence phrasal stress when functions as a focalizer [“pitch accent” in Pierrehumbert and Hirshberg’s (1990) terms]



# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian Preliminary Observations

TO004 ma c' è un altro aspetto che è importante  
TO004 nel concerto rock voi non andate a sentire  
TO004 delle cose che non avete sentito  
TO004 andate a sentire le cose che  
TO004 conoscete  
TO004 voi sentite il cantante che arriva  
TO004 e che dice adesso vi  
TO004 canto una canzone totalmente nuova il pubblico applaude evi~ educatamente ascolta  
TO004 e poi magari si scambia dei commenti ah  
TO004 mica male

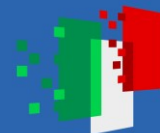
TOD1002, TO004, Turin



Finanziato  
dall'Unione europea  
NextGenerationEU



Ministero  
dell'Università  
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani  
PIANO NAZIONALE  
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

- TOI033 io dovevo suonare dopo dopo di loro  
TOI033 ero mh quello che gestiva la la console diciamo ero ileh in quel momento li  
TOI033 e la cosa che m'ha dato fastidio di questi ragazzi che son due ragazzi tral'altro della mia età praticamente
- 
- TOR006 mhmh
- 
- TOI033 boh se la tirano un pochettino  
TOI033 e io avevo detto ragazzi io sono il tecnico gli avevo detto se c'è qualche problema tecnico qualsiasi cosa
- 
- TOR006 mhmh
- 
- TOI033 chiedete a me ci mancherebbe  
TOI033 questi non han capito e tipo a un certo punto uno  
TOI033 si gira e mi fa  
TOI033 scusami vorrei una bottiglietta d'acqua  
TOI033 e da mangiare tipo  
TOI033 una torta una roba del genere gli faccio no scusami forse non hai capito  
TOI033 e poi si era proprio arrabbiato mi fa dai x io io ti aspetto muoviti  
TOI033 x x oh non hai capito cioè nel senso io sono qua per darti una ma~ mica sono il tuo barista nel senso gli ho detto
- 
- TOR006 sì sì sì
- 
- TOI033 e queste boh sono state sottigliezzeeh che succedono

PTA016, Piedmont



## Preliminary Observations

### **Sentence-internal mica:**

- Focus (secondary) accent (L+H\*)
- Follows negation
- MP



## Preliminary Observations

### “mica”:

- As a modal particle, its function is that of connecting the sentence in which it appears to the Common Ground / context, putting it into relation with a previous utterance



## Preliminary Observations

**“mica”:**

- Its meaning derives from its basic meaning (-p) plus its focal nature (evoking and contrasting set of alternatives) (on the presuppositionality of negation see a.o. Cinque 1991)



## Preliminary Observations

**“mica”:**

- This analysis would confirm the proposal already existing for modal particle in Italian (Cognola, Schifano 2018 a,b; Cognola, Moroni, Bidese 2022)





## Preliminary Observations

### “mica”:

- Considering the analysis proposed for “anche” in Italian → “mica” → involvement of PolarityP, FALSUM operator (Frana, Rowlins 2019) signaling that the proposition in which it appears should not be added to the Common Ground

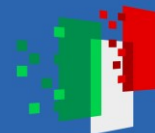




## Preliminary Observations

### **Sentence-initial MICA:**

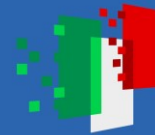
- Focus pitch accent ( $H^*+L$ ) → carries sentence stress
- Occurs without negation
- Focalizer (à la Cognola, Moroni, Bidese 2022)



## Preliminary Observations

### MICA

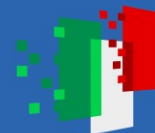
- Same basic meaning
- The particles appear within the clause or in the sentence-initial. In these configurations the pragmatic interpretation of the particle and the XP in its scope is that of a corrective focus.



## Preliminary Observations

### **Sentence-initial MICA:**

- When used as a focus typically precede the constituent in its scope
- (i) Mica Marina ha invitato
- (iii) veramente noi l'abbiamo fatto // mica con cattiveria (KPN029, 854490)



# “Mica” as a Modal Particle (MP) in Italian Hypothesis

➤ Noisy data?

Experimental  
observations are  
needed