On the internal layering of the speech-event domain

Capitalizing on some recent proposals on the functional make-up of the left periphery, this talk provides further evidence for the existence of a higher left-peripheral field of clause structure which hosts utterance-oriented elements crucial to the definition and maintenance of dialogue between discourse participants (such as interjections, vocatives, discourse markers and non-integrated adverbial clauses). Crucially, the lexical elements hosted there do not contribute to the definition of the *speech act*, meant as the communicative action effected through the production of an utterance; this kind of notion is rather typically encoded in the lower functional layer related to the Force node, which points to a clear distinction between a lower SpeechAct/Force field, encoding speech act related information, and a higher SpeechEvent field, encoding features pertaining to the utterance situation and to the dialogic interaction between speaker and hearer. The aim of the present work is to explore and better describe the internal layering of this higher structural domain of the clause, determining the relative order of primary and secondary interjections, vocatives and mirative markers, as well as of non-integrated (concessive) conditional clauses, which are analyzed as speech-event modifiers generated in a specifier of the Speech-Event field located in the high left-periphery of the main clause, above the Force node; within this structural domain they occupy a relatively low position, as they follow other utterance related lexical items like interjections, vocatives and discourse markers.