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CYCLIC CHANGE IN GRAMMAR AND DISCOURSE

Edited by

MAJ-BRITT MOSEGAARD HANSEN
and RICHARD WALTEREIT

The image is a highly complex, abstract composition of text. It features a dense, overlapping pattern of words in various languages and scripts, including Latin, French, and Chinese. The text is rendered in different colors (black, white, gray) and sizes, creating a layered, three-dimensional effect. The overall theme appears to be linguistic or historical, with words like 'linguistica', 'historia', 'grammatica', and 'linguistique' being prominent. The text is arranged in a way that suggests a sense of movement and transformation, with some words appearing to be in the foreground and others in the background. The overall effect is one of a rich, textured surface that invites close inspection.

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MAJ-BRITT MOSEGAARD HANSEN
RICHARD WALTEREIT

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Series preface

Modern diachronic linguistics has important contacts with other subdisciplines, notably first-language acquisition, learnability theory, computational linguistics, sociolinguistics, and the traditional philological study of texts. It is now recognized in the wider field that diachronic linguistics can make a novel contribution to linguistic theory, to historical linguistics, and arguably to cognitive science more widely.

This series provides a forum for work in both diachronic and historical linguistics, including work on change in grammar, sound, and meaning within and across languages; synchronic studies of languages in the past; and descriptive histories of one or more languages. It is intended to reflect and encourage the links between these subjects and fields such as those mentioned above.

The goal of the series is to publish high-quality monographs and collections of papers in diachronic linguistics generally; that is, studies focussing on change in linguistic structure, and/or change in grammars, which are also intended to make a contribution to linguistic theory, by developing and adopting a current theoretical model, by raising wider questions concerning the nature of language change, or by developing theoretical connections with other areas of linguistics and cognitive science as listed above. There is no bias towards a particular language or language family, or towards a particular theoretical framework; work in all theoretical frameworks, and work based on the descriptive tradition of language typology, as well as quantitatively based work using theoretical ideas, also feature in the series.

Adam Ledgeway and Ian Roberts

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List of abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
2PL	second-person plural
3PL	third-person plural
3FSG	third-person feminine singular
3MSG	third-person masculine singular
3SG	third-person singular
3SGM/F	third-person singular masculine/feminine
AB	absolute case
ACC	accusative case
ACT	active
AD	additive
ADNEG	additive negation
ADV	adverb(ial phrase)
AF	actor focus
ANS	<i>Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst</i>
AOR	aorist
AV	actor voice
BH	Biblical Hebrew
BNC	British National Corpus
BulNC	Bulgarian National Corpus
CC	Continuative Cycle
CDH	<i>Corpus del Diccionario histórico de la lengua española</i>
CLAPI	Corpus de Langue Parlée en Interaction
CLF	classifier
CMP	comparative
CN	common noun marker
COMP	complementizer
CONJ	conjunction
CONT	continuative
COP	copula
CoSIH	Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew
DAT	dative
DE	denominal (verb class iv)
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DIM	diminutive
DIST	distal

DM	discourse marker
DY	dynamic verb (verb class iii)
EMPH	emphatic particle
EXC	exclusive
F	feminine (other languages)
FA	factive (verb class ii)
FAM	familiar (makasar)
FP	sentence-final particle
GEN	genitive
HON	honorific
IE	Indo-European
IMP	imperative
IMPERFECT	imperfect
INF	infinitive
INDEF	indefinite
INS	instrumental
IPFV	imperfective
IV	inverse voice
LIA	Language Infrastructure made Available
LOC	locative case
LSAC	Longman Corpus of Spoken American English
LSJ	Liddell, Scott, Jones Ancient Greek lexicon
M	masculine
MASC	masculine
MP	modal particle
MV	monovalent
N	neutral
NCI	negative concord item
NDC	Nordic Dialect Corpus
NDM	De Mauro, Tullio (ed.), <i>Il Nuovo De Mauro</i> . Online at <i>Internazionale</i> , https://dizionario.internazionale.it
NEG	negation
NFIN	non-finite
NOM	nominative case
NOM/ACC	nominative/accusative
NOML	nominalizer
NOMZ	nominalizer
NoTa	Norwegian Speech Corpus
NP	noun phrase
NTLLE	Nuevo tesoro lexicográfico de la lengua española. http://ntlle.rae.es
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
PDH	Present-Day Hebrew
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PM	pragmatic marker

PN	proper noun marker
POSS	possessive
PP	potential productivity
PREP	preposition
PRON	pronoun
PRS	present
PRT	particle
PST	past
PTCL	particle
PTCP	participle
Q	question
RC	relative clause
RE	realis
RED	reduplication
REL	relativizer
RNC	Russian National Corpora
SBC	Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English
SBJ	subject
SF	augmenting stem prefix former
SG	singular
SJS	<i>Slovník jazyka staroslověnského</i>
SoAs	states-of-affairs
ST	stative verb (verb class vii)
STRONG	strong form
TAM	tense, aspect, and modality
TAUS	The spoken language investigation in Oslo
TLFi	<i>Trésor de la Langue Francaise informatisé</i> , www.atilf.fr/tlfi
TOP	topic
TRS	transitivizer
VOC	vocative
VS	Piccitto, Giorgio, Giovanni Tropea, and Salvatore C. Trovato (eds.). 1977–2002. <i>Vocabolario siciliano</i> , 5 vols. Palermo: Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani
WFT	<i>Woordenboek der Friese Taal</i> (<i>The Dictionary of the Frisian Language</i>). https://gtb.ivdnt.org/search/?owner=wft
WNT	<i>Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal</i> . https://ivdnt.org/woordenboeken/woordenboek-der-nederlandsche-taal
WSJP PAN	<i>Wielki słownik języka polskiego PAN</i> (<i>The Polish Academy of Sciences Great Dictionary of Polish</i>), https://wsjp.pl

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1

Cyclic change in grammar and discourse

An introduction

Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen and Richard Waltereit

1.1 Introduction

On the face of it, cyclical change implies a puzzling diachronic pattern. Yet the idea that language change sometimes follows a cyclic pattern has a fairly long history, going back to the early 20th century (von der Gabelentz 1901; Jespersen 1917; Meillet 1921 [1912]).

Probably the most widely known example of a cyclic change is the so-called Jespersen Cycle (Jespersen 1917; Dahl 1979), which has been observed in many different languages at different periods (e.g. Schwegler 1988; Detges 2003; Kiparsky and Condoravdi 2006; Schwenter 2006; Lucas 2007; Jäger 2008; Van der Auwera 2009; Wallage 2017). Here, an item functioning as a marker of standard negation in a given language is first optionally accompanied by an additional marker. In Old French, for instance, the standard negative marker was a preverbal *ne* (a phonetically reduced form of an earlier *non*, inherited from Latin *nōn*), which was optionally reinforced by a postverbal marker, typically either *pas* ('step' < Lat. *passu(m)*) or *mie* ('crumb' < Lat. *mica(m)*), in certain types of discourse contexts (cf. Hansen and Visconti 2009). Eventually, the newer marker becomes obligatory, and the older one starts to drop out and may disappear completely. The newer marker may then move into the slot that used to be occupied by the older marker in some or all contexts. Thus, in Modern French, *pas* has become preverbal in infinitival clauses. The development of French standard clause negation is represented schematically in (1):

(1) *ne* Verb > *ne* V (*pas*) > *ne* V *pas* > (*ne*) V *pas* > V *pas* > *pas* V

In other cases, the original negative marker merges with the newer one. For example, the original Old Latin clause negator *ne* is assumed to have merged with the numeral *oenum* 'one' to yield the Classical Latin form *nōn*. Several cycles may thus be completed within the same language or across a mother and a daughter language, as has happened with Latin and French.

From the very beginning, scholars have debated the felicity of the term ‘cycle’ as such. Very early on, von der Gabelentz (1901: §14) used the term ‘spiral’ to suggest that in each iteration the development is only approximately repetitive. In other words, the end result of a development of the relevant type is not identical to its starting point but merely resembles it in one or more respects. The evolution in (1) illustrates this: where *ne* was always obligatorily preverbal, *pas* originated and still chiefly occurs in postverbal position. The newer construction, in which clause negation is expressed by *pas* alone, is thus not structurally identical to the older one in which it was expressed by a simple *ne*. The term ‘spiral’ is also used by Meillet (1921[1912]: 140–141). It is interesting that Jespersen himself in his seminal 1917 book does not in fact mention the word ‘cycle’ or any other related metaphor. It does not seem to occur to him to relate the pattern he discovered to a particular shape. In fact, the name ‘Jespersen’s Cycle’ was only coined by Dahl (1979). Since then, however, the term ‘cycle’ has become so widely accepted in the literature that we choose to retain it here.

In this introductory chapter, we make use of a working definition of linguistic cycles as regular, recurrent patterns of language change, which take place in a structured manner. Cycles have inherent direction, standardly involving the loss of a particular linguistic item or construction¹ and its renewal by another. However, such renewal cycles often involve more or less gradual, as well as more or less significant, functional change in the expression that is eventually renewed, and it can plausibly be assumed that this functional change may be part of what triggers the perceived need for a new expression to fulfil the function originally associated with the older expression. We have therefore chosen to include in the remit of this volume the study of so-called life cycles (Dahl 2001); that is, internal changes to particular types of expressions that are regularly observed across languages and time periods (see the chapter by Ezra la Roi on the life cycle of counterfactuals). In our view, the understanding of life cycles constitutes a potentially valuable contribution to the understanding of renewal cycles.

Both renewal cycles and—by implication—life cycles of a particular kind may be found repeatedly within one language. As renewal cycles are by definition instantiated in the evolution of more than one individual expression, they are first and foremost abstractions rather than empirical objects in themselves. It follows from this that the notion of cycles—whether it pertains to life cycles or to renewal cycles—is a second-order analyst’s metaphor. The same, of course, is true of the

¹ Henceforth, we will make use of the term ‘expression’ to include both simplex linguistic items, that is, single words and morphemes, and morphologically and/or syntactically complex constructions.

related notion of spirals, as well as those of ‘waves’ and ‘clines’, as they are standardly applied within historical linguistics. Although some forms of change can be observed as such by ordinary language users, the time spans involved in cycles and congeners are usually simply too large. Moreover, none of these patterns are objectively ‘there’ in the ‘raw’ diachronic data; rather, they represent interpretations of that data.

While metaphors of this kind can constitute useful conceptual tools, it is important not to hypostatize them. Thus, we must be careful not to assume that everything that applies to the source domain must also apply to the more abstract theoretical target domain. Positing a given cycle, spiral, and so on may often involve a certain amount of idealization and/or it may rely on a particular approach to language, its uses, and its evolution. This means that one and the same instance of change can in principle be described meaningfully as a cycle by one researcher, while others prefer a different metaphor.

Nevertheless, the terminological debate hinted at above is not without purpose: thus, while all of the contributors to this volume work with what they refer to as cyclical change, some of them explicitly identify other shapes of change and distinguish them from cycles. For example, Ruti Bardenstein’s chapter separates cycles, clines, and spirals. In Bardenstein’s approach, the cline is the most general shape where an implicit function becomes explicit. The cycle is the combination of two or more consecutive clines. That is also true of what Hansen (2018a, 2018b, 2020b, this volume) calls onomasiological cyclicity (see [Section 1.1.1](#) below). A spiral, for Bardenstein, is a ‘forward’ cycle that ‘takes the language forward’, whereas in a backward cycle, ‘the earlier meaning of the item might weaken’. In a related vein, Giulio Scivoletto distinguishes ‘wave-cyclicity’ from ‘spiral-cyclicity’, depending on whether a given cycle involves the recurrence of a particular cline or rather back-and-forth movement on the same cline. Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen proposes to distinguish pragmaticalization cycles from spirals, where the latter involve a single expression which, in the course of pragmaticalization, gains a particular feature which it then subsequently loses, while, however, retaining its pragmaticalized status. Finally, Ezra la Roi distinguishes cycles from spirals, where spirals are more innovative than cycles at each iteration. The distinction between these different patterns of change has also been elaborated by [Pons Bordería and Llopis Cardona \(2020\)](#)—see [Section 1.2](#) below for further detail.

Equally importantly, a number of contributors to this book talk about cycles being driven by certain factors, saliently—but not exclusively—factors pertaining to the use of language in communication. This must not, however, be taken to embody a claim that language users act with any awareness at all that their own utterances or their interpretations of other people’s utterances may contribute to triggering or driving a given cycle of change.

1.1.1 Cycles at different levels of linguistic description

As shown by the example of the Jespersen Cycle, it has been known from the outset that cyclic developments can be found at the level of (morpho)syntax ($\approx$ grammar) across languages. It has also been assumed—as well as demonstrated empirically—that such developments can affect not only different forms of negation (e.g. Croft 1991; Veselinova 2014), as well as polarity more broadly (van Gelderen 2023: ch. 4), but also a range of other subfields of the ‘core’ grammar of sentences.

Among other areas of sentence grammar that may show evidence of cyclical change, the following have been identified in the existing literature as instantiated with some degree of crosslinguistic regularity (van Gelderen 2009b, 2011, 2022, 2023): (a) a subject and object agreement cycle, where demonstratives turn into agreement markers before being reduced to zero; (b) a copula cycle, where demonstratives, verbs, or adpositions turn into copulas before being reduced to zero; (c) a definiteness cycle, where a demonstrative becomes a definite article, then a case morpheme, before being reduced to zero; (d) various types of case cycles: marking thematic relations; subject and object marking; discourse-related (e.g. topic/focus) marking; (e) a range of tense, aspect, and mood cycles pertaining to the evolution of temporal conjunctions, temporal and aspectual auxiliaries, and aspectual and modal adverbials; (f) voice cycles, involving the rise and renewal of passive markers; and (g) complementizer cycles, in which a variety of existing expression types are re-analysed as complementizers or subordinating conjunctions.

Additional cycles of grammatical change posited in the literature but whose crosslinguistic frequency has yet to be more fully assessed, include a preposition cycle (Waters 2009), a demonstrative cycle (Rupp and Tagliamonte 2017; Vindenes 2018b; see also Fedriani and Molinelli, this volume), a psych verb cycle (Battlori et al. 2019), a relative cycle (Poletto and Sanfelici 2019), an interrogative cycle (Waltereit 2020), and a negative coordination cycle (Hansen 2021a).

A number of contributions to the present volume add yet further examples of observed cyclic developments at the level of grammar: Ljuba Veselinova and Anastasia Panova’s continuative cycles, Johan van der Auwera and Daniel Van Olmen’s additive negation cycle (which bears an obvious relationship to negative coordination), Yueh Hsin Kuo’s bidirectional cycles involving deontic necessity modals and ‘only if’ conditionals, Mira Ariel and Caterina Mauri’s ‘or’ cycles, and Haiping Long and Jian Wang’s morphological coordination cycles. The latter cycles involve a marker being added to another one with a very similar function without, however, eventually replacing it, a form of change that is very common in Sinitic languages but understudied otherwise.

Most of the kinds of cycles listed above are described as ‘micro-cycles’ by van Gelderen (2023), who also operates with a notion of ‘macro-cycles’, namely

broader developments that ‘shift the typology of a language’ (van Gelderen 2023: 128). On the one hand, macro-cycles comprise cases of ‘drift’ (Sapir 1921), where the grammar of a language gradually changes from more synthetic to more analytic in nature or vice versa. On the other hand, van Gelderen also includes as macro-cycles broad-based typological changes from head-marking to dependent-marking (Nichols 1986). For her, the subject/object agreement cycles and case cycles mentioned above thus constitute macro-cycles rather than micro-cycles. However, *contra* Vennemann (1974: 371), she rejects the classification of word-order changes such as XV > VX as macro-cyclic because they are neither triggered by grammaticalization nor unidirectional (van Gelderen 2023: 128). As will become clear below, the approach to cyclicity taken in the present volume is somewhat different, and although none of the contributions to our book study changes at this level of abstraction, we would *a priori* want to accommodate such very general word-order changes within a theory of cyclic change.

Much of the existing contemporary research on grammatical cycles has been carried out within the formalist tradition, for example, Roberts and Roussou (2003), van Gelderen (2009b, 2011, 2016b, 2022, 2023), and Bouzouita et al. (2019). There is broad agreement within the generative paradigm that cyclic change is unidirectional (van Gelderen 2009a: 3), even though that is, strictly speaking, not implied by cyclicity as a pattern of change. As pointed out by Breitbarth et al. (2019: 3), however, the directional character of cyclical change seems to be ‘at odds with a generative approach to change’ inasmuch as, on a generative view of acquisition, learners can radically re-analyse the data they are exposed to and there is no reason for them to be historically constrained. However, some authors such as Roberts and Roussou (2003) and van Gelderen (2004) suggest that cycles may be a diachronic side-effect of learners making use of economy principles and of ‘upward reanalysis’ (cf. Breitbarth et al. 2019: 4). The assumption is thus that cycles are driven by feature economy. Change from lexical to grammatical status is characterized by upwards movement in the syntactic structure, and the subsequent loss of a movement dependency is a consequence of a Merge operation. The cyclic nature of the change is explained by a universal preference for Merge over Move. In other words, these authors motivate diachronic cycles by preferences in language acquisition. Van Gelderen (2009a: 9), however, quoting Hagège’s (1993) term ‘expressive renewal’, suggests that cyclicity may also be due to speakers’ desire to be innovative. This observation points towards the potential relevance of more functional considerations in explaining cycles.

Functionally and/or cognitively orientated contemporary work on cycles has been carried out chiefly from within grammaticalization theory (e.g. Givón 1979b, 2018a; Heine et al. 1991; Bybee et al. 1994; Lehmann 1995; Heine 1997). It tends to rely on a conception along the lines of that proposed by Givón (1979b, 2018a), who

suggests that what he variously calls ‘cyclic waves of grammaticalization’ (Givón 1979b: 209) or ‘rise-and-fall cycles’ (Givón 2018a: 153) can be explained by the cline in (2) below. According to this model, a given expression involved in a cycle will start out having a discourse-pragmatic function but may then undergo grammaticalization, accompanied by gradual formal reduction, possibly resulting in its eventual disappearance. In and of itself, (2) thus illustrates one possible type of what we call a ‘life cycle’ above. Cycles in the more standard sense associated with the work of Jespersen (1917) arise when an expression that is approaching the end of the cline in (2) is renewed by another expression higher up the cline. The latter expression may then itself gradually move through the cline, potentially triggering a new round of cyclical renewal, and so on.

(2) Discourse > syntax > morphology > morphophonemics > zero

Recent research (beginning with Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a and Hansen 2014 but with Cuenca 1992–1993 as an early precursor) has revealed that cycles occur not only in the evolution of sentence grammar but are also attested in the rise of various types of pragmatic markers, at hitherto unsuspected levels of granularity. Thus, for instance, both the by now obsolete Old French adverb/conjunction *ainz* and the Modern French adverb *plutôt* have successively undergone change from expressing temporal anteriority (‘earlier’/‘sooner’) to expressing subjective preference (‘rather’), and from there to expressing correction (Hansen 2020a, 2020b).

Hansen (2018a, 2018b, 2020b) distinguishes two forms of semantic-pragmatic cycles (or ‘cycles of pragmaticalization’, as Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a call them). The type instantiated by French *ainz* and *plutôt* is called an onomasiological cycle. In an onomasiological cycle, an expression is renewed by another formally and etymologically distinct item, which, however, goes through a very similar life cycle. In other words, onomasiological cycles are identified by looking for similarities in the successive meanings and communicative functions of the expressions involved. The other type identified by Hansen is called semasiological cycle, where an expression is renewed by another formally and etymologically closely related one. This type of cycle is illustrated by, for instance, the renewal of the Old French adverb *ja* (originally ‘as of now’/‘already’ but also used as a pragmatic marker) by *déjà* (< *dès*_{prep} ‘as of’ + *ja*). Insofar as similarity of successive meanings/functions is a central criterion for identifying semasiological as well as onomasiological cycles, the former are seen as being ultimately a subtype of the latter.

Several contributions to this volume strengthen our empirical knowledge about the nature of cyclicity in the rise of pragmatic markers by presenting new and detailed case studies; see the chapters by Luísa Ferrari, Sandra Paoli, and Adrià Pardo Llibrer. Others, viz. the chapters by Ruti Bardenstein, Maj-Britt Mosegaard

Hansen, and Giulio Scivoletto, seek to further refine and elaborate on existing models of cyclicity at the level of semantics and pragmatics.

Less widely known, but also attested, are cyclic changes in the lexicon; that is, at the level of content words (which have conceptual meaning, as opposed to the procedural nature of the meanings of both grammatical and pragmatic markers; cf. [Blakemore 1987](#)). [Stern \(1932\)](#) was perhaps the first to notice this, adducing the example of a large number of Old/Middle English manner adverbs meaning ‘rapidly’ (e.g. *swiftly*, *quickly*, *smartly*, and many others besides), which repeatedly took on the additional temporal meaning ‘immediately’. Recurrent cyclic change in the lexicon is also well attested with respect to euphemisms (e.g. [Burridge 2012](#)), often within comparatively short time spans.

In a different domain, honorifics—that is, forms of address and/or reference that express respect or social deference—often seem to be affected by cyclic change. For instance, the Middle High German noun *vrouwe* (‘lady’) was originally used to address (married) women of noble rank but was subsequently extended to address (married) women in general. While in Modern German *Frau* (< *vrouwe*) as a full noun still refers to women in general, it has been partly replaced as an address term by *Dame* (originally reserved for noblewomen). Concomitantly, as a term of reference, *Dame*, in spite of still being associated with higher social status, has also come to be used to refer to women in general in certain contexts, thereby entering into competition with *Frau*. In recent years, though, chivalrous *Dame* may have lost some currency, whereas egalitarian *Frau* has again become acceptable or even expected in most contexts.

We find it plausible that—like the rise of pragmatic markers—cyclic change at the lexical level will tend to be driven by pragmatics, resulting from the attempt to solve basic problems in human communication. In the case of honorifics, it seems evident that the communicative problem relates to politeness strategies that push speakers to sometimes aim a little too high rather than too low when addressing or talking about other people ([Dahl 2001](#): 98–99). Among the contributions to the present volume, the chapter by Chiara Ghezzi proposes an in-depth analysis of cyclic changes to the Italian honorific system, touching on both grammar and lexicon, while Ana Llopis Cardona pursues a similar aim in her chapter on another politeness-driven cycle, related to conversational ‘farewell’ routines in Spanish.

The existence of cyclic change at the level of (lexical) semantics and pragmatics raises questions about purely syntactically driven models. The relevance of a more functionally orientated stance is supported by recent empirical studies suggesting that specific instances of grammatical cycles in specific languages may, in fact, be at least partially driven by pragmatic factors (e.g. [Detges and Waltereit 2002, 2016](#); [Schwenter 2006](#); [Hansen and Visconti 2009](#); [Grossman and Polis 2014](#); [Rosemeyer and Grossman 2017](#); [Rupp and Tagliamonte 2017](#); [Detges 2018, 2020](#); [Vindenes 2018b](#); [Waltereit 2020](#); [Hansen 2021a](#)).

The relevance of seeing cyclic language change through a pragmatic lens is further supported by evidence that, just as lexical cycles may overlap with both grammatical and semantic-pragmatic ones, so these two latter types of cycles may interact with one another. For instance, [Fonseca-Greber \(2007\)](#) observes that, in some dialects such as conversational Swiss French, the original French preverbal clause negator *ne* appears to have taken on a new pragmatic function. As noted by [Hansen \(2020b: 173–174\)](#), the kinds of contexts in which this innovative use of the preverbal negator is found according to [Fonseca-Greber \(2007\)](#) are highly reminiscent of the kinds of contexts that used to license the still optional *postverbal* negator in Medieval French (cf. [Hansen and Visconti 2009](#)). It may be argued, therefore, that alongside the Jespersen Cycle, French *ne* and *pas* have undergone an additional semantic-pragmatic cycle, such that the erstwhile (semantic) function of *ne*—that is, that of marking standard clause negation—is nowadays fulfilled by *pas*, whereas the original (pragmatic) function of *pas* can currently be fulfilled by *ne*, at least in some dialects.

The notion of cyclicity suggests that the changes involved have directionality. That raises the question whether cycles are generally unidirectional, as posited in the formalist literature, or whether they are less strongly restricted. In the present volume, Yueh Hsin Kuo argues that cyclical change should be defined widely enough not to be unidirectional. Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen suggests that there is a strong tendency for cyclical change to be unidirectional, but that there are important exceptions, namely semasiological cycles (see also [Hansen 2021a](#) for a case study from sentence grammar). Similarly, Giulio Scivoletto suggests that his above-mentioned spiral-cycles constitute a special case, which—while probably less common than wave cycles—may nevertheless enhance our understanding of language change and directionality.

1.2 The present volume: aims and objectives

Although, as we have seen, the notion of cycles of change has been around since the birth of modern linguistics, there is still no broad consensus in the literature on exactly how to define a cycle, how cycles are triggered, or the place of cycles within a broader typology of forms of language change. As already noted, the very notion of a cycle is evidently metaphorical in nature, and competing notions such as spirals, waves, and clines have sometimes been used to describe phenomena that have elsewhere been classed as cycles. Thus, there remains important theoretical work to be done on clarifying central concepts, as well as on identifying the similarities and differences between them.

The present volume has as its aim to investigate a range of interrelated questions regarding cyclic change. Our working hypothesis, which breaks with tradition in the field, is that cycles are pragmatically driven by default, independently of

whether they pertain principally to (morpho)syntax, to the lexicon, or to semantics and pragmatics. The contributors develop this line of thought within what can be broadly defined as cognitive, functional, and/or typological approaches to language, which are particularly well suited to accounting for pragmatic influences at all three levels. The chapters by Yueh Hsin Kuo and by Giulio Scivoletto go further by exploring the potential of a specific functional-cognitive model of grammar, namely (Diachronic) Construction Grammar, to elucidate aspects of cyclic language change.

The chapters by Ruti Bardenstein, Ittamar Erb and Mira Ariel, Chiara Ghezzi, and Ana Llopis Cardona, in particular, are concerned with identifying centrally important drivers. For Erb and Ariel, a prominent driver of cyclic change is the tension between what they call ‘prototypicalization’, on the one hand, and expressivity on the other. Prototypicalization is defined as a process whereby linguistic expressions become specialized for a particularly salient meaning or function. Expressivity in turn motivates the coining of new expressions for the less salient meanings/functions of the original expression. In a broadly similar vein, Mira Ariel and Caterina Mauri argue that ‘or’ cycles are driven by the tension between economy and expressivity that has often been posited as a principal driver of language change more generally and which can be traced back at least to von der Gabelentz (1901: 190ff.). As for Bardenstein, she posits five basic types of motivations for language change based on whether they are internal or external and inference-based versus non-inference-based, and explores how each type of motivation may give rise to cyclic phenomena. Finally, Ghezzi and Llopis Cardona both argue for the role of higher-level interactional, and even socio-cultural, factors. Other chapters, such as those by Luísa Ferrari, Ezra la Roi, and Johan van der Auwera and Daniel Van Olmen, contribute to identifying pragmatic triggers of change at a more fine-grained level of description.

Closely related to this basic aim of demonstrating the crucial role of pragmatics in cyclical change are a range of more specific objectives. Individual contributions to the volume address subsets of those objectives to varying degrees.

A fundamental, and prominent, empirical objective is to add a substantial body of original case studies to extant work on cyclicity, pertaining to the three levels of description identified above; that is, (morpho)syntax, the lexicon, and semantics/pragmatics. As already suggested above, this objective is addressed by the contributions by Mira Ariel and Caterina Mauri, Ittamar Erb and Mira Ariel, Chiara Fedriani and Piera Molinelli, Luísa Ferrari, Chiara Ghezzi, Yueh Hsin Kuo, Ezra la Roi, Ana Llopis Cardona, Haiping Long and Jian Wang, Sandra Paoli, Adrià Pardo Llibrer, Johan van der Auwera and Daniel Van Olmen, and Ljuba Veselinova and Anastasia Panova.

A related objective is to gauge whether cyclic change is found across all languages and language families, as well as across time periods. While we are not

currently in a position to give a firm answer to this question, the range of object languages represented in the contributions to this volume is very wide, suggesting at least a tentative yes to the question, while adding further empirical coverage to the field. The languages studied here prominently include a number of major and minor Romance languages (both Old and New World varieties: see the chapters by Mira Ariel and Caterina Mauri, Chiara Fedriani and Piera Molinelli, Luísa Ferrari, Chiara Ghezzi, Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen, Ana Llopis Cardona, Sandra Paoli, Adrià Pardo Llibrer, and Giulio Scivoletto), but individual contributions also focus on Latin (Chiara Fedriani and Piera Molinelli), a range of Germanic languages (Johan van der Auwera and Daniel Van Olmen, Ljuba Veselinova and Anastasia Panova, Urd Vindenes), Slavic languages (Ljuba Veselinova and Anastasia Panova), Ancient Greek (Ezra la Roi), Hebrew (Mira Ariel and Caterina Mauri, Ruti Bardenstein, and Ittamar Erb and Mira Ariel), and Mandarin and other Sinitic languages (Yueh Hsin Kuo and Haiping Long and Jian Wang), as well as Austronesian languages (Ljuba Veselinova and Anastasia Panova).

One of the questions that initially sparked our work is a concern to elucidate how and to what extent cycles belonging to different levels of linguistic description may interact. The chapters by Chiara Ghezzi and Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen specifically consider cycles involving more than one level of description.

By extension, we wish to know more about how and to what extent other recognized patterns of language change relate to cycles. This question is explored in the chapters by Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen, Sandra Paoli, and Giulio Scivoletto. Hansen investigates relationships between ‘non-linear’ forms of diachronic development, including both cycles and spirals, and the three so-called macropaths of change, namely grammaticalization (Meillet 1921[1912]), lexicalization (e.g. Brinton and Traugott 2005), and pragmaticalization (Erman and Kotsinas 1993). Paoli is concerned to elucidate the relationship between semantic-pragmatic cycles and grammaticalization clines, and Scivoletto, as already mentioned, is interested in the role played by constructionalization and constructional change (Traugott and Trousdale 2013) in cyclic developments.

The issue of relating cyclicity to other recognized patterns of change also implies an interest in what constitutes the limits of the notion of a cycle, beyond which the concept begins to lose explanatory power. In the recent literature, the study by Pons Bordería and Llopis Cardona (2020) already represents a valuable step in this direction. Discussing cyclicity at the semantic-pragmatic level, these authors propose a principled distinction between four related and superficially similar processes, namely (a) cycles, which may be either spiral-like ‘three-point’ cycles or ‘two-point’ cycles, (b) replication, (c) concomitance, and (d) paradigmatic increase. Detges (2020), on the other hand, makes a distinction between the standardly recognized renewal cycles (such as the Jespersen Cycle) and a type that he

calls ‘satellite cycles.’ The latter are cyclical only in a much looser sense: they are triggered by speakers’ perceived expressive needs and may result in a proliferation of newer forms (‘satellites’), which compete with an older ‘canonical’ form within a given notional domain, but which typically fail to fully replace the canonical form. Over time, the respective importance of these satellites may vary, and some may even become obsolete before the canonical form does. In the present volume, the chapter by Johan van der Auwera and Daniel Van Olmen makes use of this distinction between canonical and satellite forms to explain the development of new additive negators in Dutch. Other chapters in this volume include critical discussions of the extent to which the notion of a cycle is meaningfully applicable when accounting for a particular set of changes. These include the chapters by Chiara Fedriani and Piera Molinelli, by Sandra Paoli, and in particular that by Urd Vindenes, who concludes that the evolution of the Norwegian similative demonstratives that she is interested in here is ultimately not cyclical in nature.

It is worth pointing out that the study of cyclic developments is not only of interest to diachronic linguistics. As crosslinguistically attested patterns, cycles can provide a window on basic building blocks of human cognition and/or interpersonal behaviour. Thus, an important objective of several of the contributions in this volume is to assess the role of both cognitive-pragmatic and sociopragmatic factors such as inferencing, discourse processing, politeness, and discourse traditions in triggering and driving cyclic changes at different levels of linguistic description. The chapters by Ruti Bardenstein, Itamar Erb and Mira Ariel, Luísa Ferrari, Chiara Ghezzi, Yueh Hsin Kuo, and Ana Llopis Cardona, as well as Johan van der Auwera and Daniel Van Olmen, contain suggestive insights into this question. In addition, Adrià Pardo Llibrer argues that pragmaticalization cycles can be shown to interact with discourse-structural properties of utterances.

There are a number of additional questions regarding cyclic language change that we have been able to treat only relatively superficially, if at all, in the present volume and which therefore require further research.

The existing literature suggests that, crosslinguistically, cyclic changes may be concentrated in certain notional domains of grammar (where grammar is understood in a broad sense, comprising not just ‘core’ sentence grammar but also what may be called ‘thetic’ grammar or macrogrammar/macro-syntax; cf. Berrendonner 1990; Blanche-Benveniste et al. 1991; Haselow 2016; Heine et al. 2021; see Hansen, this volume). The extent to which this is accurate, as opposed to being a—partly self-perpetuating—perception based on the particular case studies adduced in previous studies and replicated for additional languages by other researchers, remains an unanswered question. If it is accurate, future research will clearly wish to investigate possible reasons.

A very closely related question pertains to the degree to which cyclic changes affecting similar notional domains are triggered by similar factors and manifest in similar ways across languages and language families. While the chapters by

Mira Ariel and Caterina Mauri and by Ljuba Veselinova and Anastasia Panova go some way towards addressing this question, a good deal more empirical research is required before solid generalizations can be made.

A final question that has been of interest to us, but on the answer to which we have made only modest progress, is to what extent cycles at different levels of description involve so-called chain shifts (Martinet 1952), and whether those that do typically involve push chains or drag chains. We have thus far found this difficult to verify empirically, so we leave the question for future research.

1.2.1 Structure of the volume and chapter summaries

Thematically, the contributions to the present volume can be roughly divided into two clusters, albeit with some inevitable degree of overlap. Several of the chapters explicitly discuss the limits of cyclicity.

The first cluster of chapters (Part I: Cyclic Change in Grammar) consists of studies of a wide variety of grammatical phenomena from across a significant range of languages, which—to varying degrees—appear to exhibit cyclic forms of evolution. To acknowledge the foundational status of negative markers as examples of cyclic change, we begin Part I with a chapter on connective negators. We end it with a chapter on ‘or’ constructions, which form a bridge to the more discourse-orientated Part II of the book.

Johan van der Auwera and Daniel Van Olmen propose an in-depth analysis of a range of additive negation constructions in Dutch (i.e. semantic equivalents of English ‘neither ... nor’), including both their synchronic uses and their diachronic development. The authors show that the constructions have arisen sequentially and that their synchronic competition reflects that fact. Thus, the oldest construction *noch*, which is argued to be the result of a cyclic development that took place in Old Dutch, has been in decline for some time compared to the second oldest *ook niet/geen* (‘also not/no’). As *ook niet/geen* has not fully replaced *noch*, the relationship between these two constructions constitutes an incomplete cycle at the present stage of Dutch. The most recent cluster of constructions, which is based on the quantifier *min* (‘little’), is argued to have the status of a satellite construction to the more canonical, and currently more frequent, *ook niet/geen*. For the time being, it is thus not obvious that a new cycle is underway in Dutch.

The chapter by Chiara Fedriani and Piera Molinelli charts successive changes to the Latin and Italian system of demonstratives over a 2,000-year period. The authors argue that this system has been subject to a pragmatically driven onomasiological cycle. That cycle involves, on the one hand, repeated reorganization of the inventory of forms (distinctions between two vs. three contrasting forms), and on the other hand, a repeated strengthening and renewal of the forms by the incorporation of deictic elements. A particular focus of the chapter are the

most recent changes in Italian, which are documented using a quantitative and qualitative corpus approach.

Urd Vindenes has previously documented that cyclic developments of demonstratives, such as those described in Chiara Fedriani and Piera Molinelli's chapter, are also found in Norwegian for so-called identity demonstratives (Vindenes 2018b). Her chapter in the present volume proposes a fine-grained formal and functional analysis of a different type of demonstratives in that language, namely similatives. She shows that there is competition in colloquial Norwegian between the simple similative demonstrative *sånn* ('such') and complex similatives reinforced by locative adverbs like *her/der* ('here'/'there'). However, unlike identity demonstratives, which are likewise reinforced by locative adverbs, similative demonstratives do not seem to undergo full replacement cycles, whereby the locative adverbs themselves come to function as similatives. Vindenes suggests various conflicting mechanisms that may account for this absence of the final replacement stage, thus contributing to our understanding of the kinds of factors that may constrain cyclic developments.

On the basis of diachronic corpus evidence and synchronic experimental evidence, Ittamar Erb and Mira Ariel study the evolution of possessives in Hebrew, where a split between inalienable and alienable possession can be observed. They present what they call 'prototypicalization' as an important driver of cyclic language change and suggest that it may be a more plausible mechanism for triggering renewal than alternatives such as the Principle of Extravagance. Prototypicalization happens when a construction with several subfunctions becomes specialized for the most prototypical of those subfunctions. This leaves language users with no suitable expression for the less prototypical functions, thus prompting them to introduce a new construction. The authors argue that inalienable possession constitutes the prototypical discourse profile of possessives, and that the more recent possessive construction in Hebrew emerged in contexts that precisely did not fit this profile.

Ljuba Veselinova and Anastasia Panova posit the existence of a hitherto overlooked crosslinguistic 'Continuative Cycle,' consisting in the regular renewal of continuative markers (i.e. markers corresponding to English *still*). Initially, the authors focus specifically on North Germanic and Slavic languages. They then go on to show, on the basis of a substantial language sample, that the Continuative Cycle is also attested in Austronesian languages. Their analysis demonstrates that expressions engaged in this cycle can follow two different pathways: either renewal takes the form of replacement of an older marker by a newer, etymologically unrelated one, or it may involve reinforcement of the older marker by an additional element in a way that is reminiscent of the Jespersen Cycle.

The chapter by Ezra la Roi traces the life cycle of counterfactual conditionals, with a particular focus on Ancient Greek, but including a diachronic comparison with similar constructions in Indo-European languages more generally. The

author posits a total of three stages of development within this 'life cycle', a term he argues is preferable to the simple term 'cycle' insofar as not all counterfactual constructions go through every stage of the cycle. The third and final stage, in which the counterfactual use of the construction becomes unstable, is open-ended in the sense of having three possible manifestations, two of which result in a form of renewal. The chapter proposes a detailed account of the principal drivers and mechanisms that are deemed to be active at each stage.

Yueh Hsin Kuo is concerned with what he terms 'bidirectional cycles of indirectness' in Mandarin. He illustrates this phenomenon with a series of cyclic developments that have taken place within the grammar of Mandarin, whereby a deontic necessity modal has developed into an 'only if' conditional marker and vice versa. Working within a Constructionalist framework, the author argues that this type of cycle is pragmatically driven by a desire to communicate in conventionally indirect ways where possible. Moreover, conventional indirectness in this case relies on the morphosyntactic vagueness of modals/conditional markers in certain contexts.

The chapter by Haiping Long and Jian Wang looks at a comparatively little-studied phenomenon in Sinitic languages, which they term 'morphological coordination'. This is a process whereby grammatical markers of various kinds, including such disparate categories as prepositions, case markers, aspect markers, copulas, conjunctions, relativizers, nominalizers, and possessive markers, regularly come to be systematically juxtaposed with a second marker with (more or less) the same meaning. Despite the seeming redundancy of this strategy, older markers tend not to be replaced by newer ones; rather, the two co-exist in the same syntactic slot. The authors use this fact as a basis for positing morphological coordination as constituting a type of cyclicity that is different from the types of cycles that have hitherto been recognized at the levels of grammar and discourse.

Mira Ariel and Caterina Mauri posit the existence of crosslinguistic cycles in the expression of alternativity ('or' relations). Alternativity constructions, they argue, may be symmetric, asymmetric, or neutral. In a symmetric construction, the alternatives are marked as equally likely in the speaker's estimation, whereas asymmetric constructions mark one alternative as preferred; neutral constructions accommodate either interpretation. On the basis of case studies from Hebrew and Italian, the authors show that 'or' constructions may evolve diachronically from expressing one of these forms of alternativity to expressing another before returning to their point of departure, and they propose that such 'or' cycles can be explained by the tension between two opposing pragmatic forces, namely expressivity versus economy.

The second cluster of chapters (Part II: Cyclic Change in Discourse) are orientated towards cyclic change at the discourse level. Thus, several contributions adduce new evidence of pragmaticalization cycles (or semantic-pragmatic cycles), while others are concerned to elucidate the place of such cycles within a broader

typology of change and the crosslinguistic mechanisms that trigger cyclic and related changes.

Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen's chapter revisits a longstanding debate concerning the rise of pragmatic markers, viz. whether this process is a case of grammaticalization or rather of a distinct process called pragmaticalization. Empirically, Hansen is concerned with what she calls 'non-linear' forms of pragmaticalization. These are defined in contrast to 'linear' pragmaticalization, which represents the most widely recognized form of evolution within this domain. The author argues that, in order to adequately account for non-linear pragmaticalization, we need to maintain a distinction between three macropaths of change, namely pragmaticalization, grammaticalization, and lexicalization, two of which are shown to combine in certain subtypes of non-linear pragmaticalization. Four such subtypes are posited, including both cyclical and spiral-like forms, and each of them is illustrated by one or more examples from Romance languages.

The chapter by Giulio Scivoletto proposes a typology of four different types of cycles, elaborated within a Diachronic Construction Grammar framework, and illustrated mainly with reference to pragmaticalization cycles. The author proposes two intersecting parameters: on the one hand, he distinguishes cycles that are constituted by recurrent clines (what he terms 'wave' cyclicity) from those that are characterized by back-and-forth change ('spiral' cyclicity). On the other hand, he distinguishes cycles that involve constructionalization from those that involve constructional shift. The different types of cycles are illustrated by examples from Romance languages, drawing on, but in some cases reinterpreting and/or adding to, analyses in the existing literature.

Ruti Bardenstein's chapter discusses crosslinguistic clines and cycles of meaning change. It outlines motivations, mechanisms, and kinds of patterns in language change that can become cyclic, highlighting the pragmatic and cognitive factors behind them. The author defines two basic types of cycle based on their direction of evolution: (a) a 'Forward' cycle (or spiral), which is based on the recurrence of a particular discursive motivation and functional achievement of that motivation, and (b) a 'Backward' cycle, which is characterized by renewal of meaning (also expressed in form). The aim is to elaborate on existing understandings of semantic-pragmatic cycles and to unite them with the more traditionally recognized grammaticalization cycles.

In her contribution, Sandra Paoli traces the history of the Occitan particles *be(n)* and *pla(n)*, starting with their Latin etymons *BENE* ('well') and *PLANE* ('plainly'), arguing that their respective four-stage evolutions from manner adverb to degree adverb, then attitudinal sentence adverb, and finally affirmative modal particle can be seen as constituting an onomasiological cycle of pragmaticalization. The author shows that the gradual pragmaticalization of *be(n)* diachronically precedes that of *pla(n)*, and that the consequences of the diachronic shift from *be(n)* to *pla(n)* are reflected in their diatopic distribution across dialects of Occitan at the synchronic

level, with South-Eastern dialects being more conservative in this respect. Importantly, Paoli suggests that manner adverbs may be a crosslinguistically common source of semantic-pragmatic cycles.

Luísa Ferrari looks at what seems to be an ongoing onomasiological cycle of renewal of contrast markers in Brazilian Portuguese, involving the connectives *ao passo que* and *enquanto (que)* ('while'/'whereas'). Both have a context-level function as markers of oppositional contrast in contemporary Brazilian Portuguese, and both have gone through an antecedent phase of marking temporal simultaneity at the content level. Based on a fine-grained analysis of the semantic and pragmatic features of these two types of discourse connection using data from the 18th century to the present day, Ferrari argues that the passage from one to the other relies crucially on metonymic relationships involving degrees of similarity versus difference.

Adrià Pardo Llibrer's chapter likewise presents a case study of a pragmatization cycle, in this case involving the Spanish pragmatic markers *en plan* and *rollo* (both 'like'). He shows that these two expressions have both been subject to a three-stage evolution, whereby they initially evolve from etymologically unrelated source meanings to first marking approximation at the content level. From there, they are recruited to context-level functions, initially marking online speech planning, and subsequently developing a quotative function. Pardo Llibrer shows that the respective evolutions of the two markers are staggered in time, with changes to *rollo* following similar changes to *en plan*. On this basis, he argues that the two markers together constitute an onomasiological cycle of pragmatization.

Chiara Ghezzi's chapter on cyclic changes to grammatical deference strategies in Italian is situated at the intersection between diachronic pragmatics and philology. Ghezzi is concerned specifically with changes to the system underlying the use of address terms, chiefly the pronouns *tu* (2ps), *voi* (2pp), and *lei* (3ps), but also various titles, such as *Vostra Signoria* ('Your Lordship'). She shows how the grammatical categories of person and number interact with the sociopragmatic parameters of power versus distance on the one hand and reverence versus deference on the other, resulting in repeated changes of a cyclical nature. Although, as suggested, these changes centrally involve grammar, the author emphasizes that they should not be seen as predominantly system-based, but rather as following from the changing communicative needs of language users.

Finally, like the preceding one, Ana Llopis Cardona's chapter on cyclic developments in Spanish 'farewell' routines involves both diachronic pragmatics and philology, and it further expands the notion of pragmatization cycles to comprise conversational routines. Her study documents the existence of an onomasiological cycle of pragmatization between the Latin farewell formula *vale(te)* (originally 'be healthy'), which was adopted into 15th-century Spanish, and the

more recent native forms *cuidate/cuidese* ('take care of yourself'). She also discusses the possibility that there may be a semasiological cycle between Latin *vale(te)* and Modern Spanish *vale*, concluding that if such a cycle exists, it is only at a very abstract level, given that the native source meaning of Spanish *vale* ('be useful') is different from that of its Latin forebear.

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PART I

CYCLIC CHANGE IN GRAMMAR

Additive negation in Dutch, from synchrony to diachrony, cyclical and noncyclical

Johan van der Auwera and Daniel Van Olmen

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter we study how Dutch expresses what corresponds to English *neither... nor* as in Shakespeare's *Neither a borrower nor a lender be*. We propose to call this domain 'additive negation' and in [Section 2.2](#) we justify the term and compare it to other terms used in this connection. [Section 2.3](#) sketches the synchrony of Dutch additive negation and we will see that there are three sets of strategies. [Section 2.4](#) sketches the diachrony, taking its starting point in the synchrony and in some remarks in the literature and adding a few limited corpus probes. We show how the development of one of the strategies represents a kind of change which is undocumented so far and for which the term 'discourse entailment' has been suggested. We also focus on whether the changes can be characterized as cycles. [Section 2.5](#) is the conclusion.

2.2 Additive negation

In this section we first define the notion of 'additive negation'. We also present elements of a typology.

Let 'additive negation' be the term for the constructions illustrated with Dutch *noch ... noch*, *niet ... en ook niet* and *niet ... en evenmin* in [\(1\)](#).

(1) Dutch

- a. *Ik vind het noch zinvol noch respectvol.*
 I find it ADNEG sensible ADNEG respectful
 'I find it neither sensible nor respectful.'
- b. *Ik vind het niet zinvol en ook niet respectvol.*
 I find it NEG sensible [and AD NEG]_{ADNEG} respectful
 'I find it not sensible and not respectful either.'

- c. *Ik vind het niet zinvol en evenmin respectvol.*
 I find it NEG sensible [and equally.little]_{ADNEG} respectful
 ‘I find it not sensible and not respectful either.’

Additive negation uses one or more¹ ‘additive negators’ (‘ADNEGS’), which are elements that both connect and negate phrases or clauses, symbolized by ‘X’ and ‘Y’ in what follows, and that furthermore express that what is predicated of X is additionally predicated of Y (cf. also Szabolcsi and Haddican 2004). In (1a), the three components (i.e. connection, negation, and addition) are expressed synthetically with one word, viz. *noch*. In (1b) and (1c) we see analytic versions, with either three or two words for the Y component, viz. *en ook niet* and *en evenmin*. To indicate that we consider these two- or three-word constructions as additive connectors, we use square brackets and a subscript ADNEG.

It is not part of the definition that the additive negator must be used with both X and Y. In (1a), *noch* is used with X and Y, but in (2) there is either the ordinary clausal negator (‘NEG’), as in (2a), or there is nothing, as in (2b).

(2) Dutch

- a. *Ik vind het niet zinvol, noch respectvol.*
 I find it NEG sensible ADNEG respectful
 b. *Ik vind het Ø zinvol noch respectvol*
 I find it Ø sensible ADNEG respectful.
 ‘I find it neither sensible nor respectful.’

For our purposes, the nonadditive negator need not be clausal. In (3) we see a negative determiner *geen*. *Geen* is glossed with ‘NEG’, just like the clausal negator.

(3) Dutch

- Er was geen geld en ook geen voedsel*
 there was NEG money [and AD NEG]_{ADNEG} food
 ‘There was no money and no food either.’

It is also not part of the definition that the X and Y elements must be structurally identical, which differs from the approach taken in van der Auwera and Koohkan (2022: 20) and Salaberri (2022: 648–649).

¹ It is possible that constructions with three or more ADNEGS, as in (a), have partially different properties, but this issue is outside the purview of this chapter.

(a) I like *neither coffee nor tea nor fruit juice*.

(4) English

- a. Mary was *neither* happy, *nor* was she sad.
 b. Mary was *neither* happy *nor* sad.

Quirk et al. (1991: 938–939) call the pattern shown in (4a) ‘mixed’. For (4a) they consider *neither* to be an adverb and *nor* a coordinator, different from their occurrence in (4b), in which both *neither* and *nor* are taken to be coordinators. The difference between adverbs—here ‘conjunctive’ adverbs—and coordinators (and also conjunctions)—is, of course, interesting and has attracted a fair amount of research (e.g. Bredschneider 1999 or Broekhuis and Corver 2019: 212–217 for Dutch). It has also been suggested that *neither* is a focus particle (Johannessen 2005). These issues are outside the scope of this chapter.

Finally, it is not part of the definition that the analytic constructions must contain an explicit conjunction. The conjunction may be ‘expressed’ *asyndetically*, with a pause, typically marked by a comma.

(5) Dutch

- Er was geen geld, ook geen voedsel.*
 there was NEG money[, AD NEG]_{ADNEG} food
 ‘There was no money, no food either.’

We will henceforth refer to the patterns with and without *en* as ‘(en) ook NEG’.

The term ‘additive negation’ is thus used in a wide sense. But it is not as wide as ‘connective negation’, used in van der Auwera (2021), van der Auwera et al. (2021), and van der Auwera and Koohkan (2022). ‘Connective negation’ lacks the additive component and thus also covers constructions such as the ones in (6).

(6) Dutch

- a. *Ik vind het niet zinnig en niet respectvol.*
 I find it NEG sensible and NEG respectful
 ‘I find it not sensible and not respectful.’
 b. *Ik vind het niet zinnig of respectvol.*
 I find it NEG sensible or respectful
 ‘I find it not sensible or respectful.’

‘Additive negation’ is wider than ‘correlative negation’ (Gianollo 2018), which applies easily to *noch ... noch* in (1a), less easily to *niet ... en ook niet* (1b) or *niet ...*

en evenmin in (1c), and least of all to $\emptyset$... *noch* in (2b).² It is also wider than ‘negative coordinating conjunction’ (Hansen 2021a), which applies easily to *noch*, but less so to the multi-word constructions *en ook niet* or *en evenmin*. Our term is different from ‘emphatic negative coordination’, proposed by Haspelmath (2007) and taken up by Salaberri (2022, 2023a, 2023b), though the idea is similar to our idea. When something is added, this ‘something’ is, trivially, a separate element. This idea of separation and addition comes close to the way in which Salaberri (2022: 649), following Haspelmath (2007: 15), defines ‘emphasis’: ‘it is emphasized that the coordinated members are part of a coordination structure and are thus considered separately’. However, there is also the more common notion of emphasis, used, for example, in the comprehensive Dutch grammar called *Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst* or ANS (section 25.8.1) (Instituut voor de Nederlandse Taal 2023), where it is stated that the double *noch* in (1a) is more emphatic than the single *noch* in (2b). In both versions, however, the coordinated elements are considered separately. To be able to use the ordinary notion of emphasis, we do not use it for the general phenomenon, which we just call ‘additive negation’. Other terms reflecting the same idea are ‘segregatory’ (Quirk et al. 1991: 953–956) and ‘distributive’ (Broekhuis and Corver 2019).

In most of the examples so far, the additive negators connect phrasal constituents. But, as already adumbrated by the examples in (4), there are other types. Van der Auwera (2021) and van der Auwera et al. (2021) distinguished four types, but we now revise this typology and extend it to six types.

A special phrasal additive negation is ‘finite’ phrasal additive negation; that is, the additive negation of finite verbs. The reason for distinguishing this is that non-finite phrasal (henceforth just ‘phrasal’) additive negation and finite phrasal (henceforth just ‘finite’) additive negation may be constructed differently. Thus in French, finite additive negation cannot have the double *ni* construction found in phrasal additive negation—compare (7a) to (8). Instead, we get a construction with *ni ne* for the Y component, illustrated in (7b).

(7) French

- a. **Ils* (ne) ni *peuvent* ni *doivent répondre*.
 They (NEG) ADNEG can ADNEG must answer
- b. *Ils* ne *peuvent* ni ne *doivent répondre*.
 they NEG can ADNEG NEG must answer
- ‘They neither can nor must reply’.

² In the Dutch literature, the term *reeksvormer* (lit.) ‘series former’ is found for the correlative structure. The term was introduced by Paardekooper (1963: 146).

(8) French

Il n'aime ni le théâtre ni l'opéra.
 he NEG likes ADNEG the theatre ADNEG the opera
 'He likes neither theatre nor opera.'

Additive negation can also have scope over clauses. We call it the 'clausal' use. That it is special can be illustrated by English (9). It contains the one clausal *neither* example in Horn (1989) out of a total of 255 *neither* attestations.

(9) English

... for *neither* can there be anything more extreme than the extreme, *nor* can there be more than two extremes for one internal. (Horn 1989: 37; italics ours)

So, at least in English, clausal connection is very marked—Bond (2011: 87) gives such sentences a question mark. We furthermore distinguish both phrasal and clausal uses from a 'phrasal-clausal use', illustrated with Dutch (10). Here a subordinate finite clause functions as a phrasal complement. This construction is different from the simple phrasal use, for the phrasal-clausal use cannot use the 'X ADNEG Y' strategy; that is, the strategy in which X has no negator.

(10) Dutch

*Ik zei niet/noch/*Ø dat hij lachte, noch dat hij*
 I said NEG/ADNEG/Ø that he laughed ADNEG that he
weende.
 cried
 'I said neither that he laughed nor that he cried.'

The phrasal-clausal use is also different from the simple clausal use, which, in (11), cannot use *noch* for the X element.

(11) Dutch

*Jan zou *noch/niet helpen, noch kon hij iemand*
 Jan would ADNEG/NEG help ADNEG could he somebody
anders om hulp vragen.
 else for help ask
 'Jan wouldn't help, nor could he ask somebody else for help.'

A fifth special use is illustrated with French (12).

(12) French³

A: *Je t' aime.* B: (Ni) *moi non plus.*
I you love ADNEG me [NEG more]_{ADNEG}
'I love you.' 'Me neither.'

We call this use 'phrasal-elliptical', for the elliptical response B contains both a phrase and an additive negator. The label 'phrasal-elliptical' seems clumsy, but we need it to distinguish it from a simple 'elliptical' construction, which only contains an additive negator, as in the response in French (13). *Non plus* is the sole additive negator here. In the phrasal-elliptical use *non plus* is possible too, as shown in (12), but there is also the alternative *ni ... non plus*, which is impossible in the elliptical constructions.

(13) French

A: *Je ne suis pas malade. Est-ce que Jean est malade ?*
I NEG am NEG sick is-it that Jean is sick
'I am not sick. Is Jean sick?'

B: **Non, ni.* / **Non, ni non plus.* / (?Non,)
No ADNEG no [ADNEG NEG more]_{ADNEG} no
non plus.
[NEG more]_{ADNEG}
'(No,) he isn't either.'

Figure 2.1 summarizes the parameters to be used in the present study. We will refer to the ones in the bottom line as 'contextual parameters'.

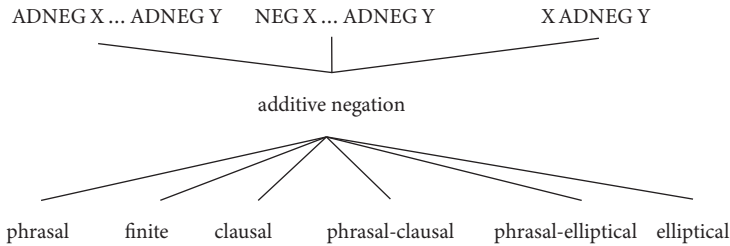


Figure 2.1 Additive negation: contextual parameters

Note that we do not claim that these contextual parameters are relevant or equally important in all languages. We also do not claim that these parameters

³ This infamous conversation is pragmatically marked—for some background, see www.google.com/search%3Fclient=firefox-bd%26q=je%2Bt%27aime, accessed 19 October 2022.

are the only ones. We know that there are other parameters—see [Jespersen \(1917: 103–116\)](#), [Bond \(2011\)](#), and [Salaberri \(2022\)](#)—but in what follows we will refer only to the ones shown in Figure 2.1.

2.3 The synchrony of Dutch additive negation

2.3.1 Overall frequency differences

We have illustrated the three main ADNEG strategies of Dutch in (1), in terms of what appears with the Y component. One strategy uses *noch*, another one (*en*) *ook* NEG, and a third one involves a construction with *min*. Each type shows variation and there are also intermediate types. The variation in the case of *noch* concerns what precedes the X element and this has already been illustrated—see examples (1a) and (2). In the case of (*en*) *ook* NEG, the variation concerns the presence versus absence of the conjunction *en*, the choice between the clausal negator *niet* and the negative determiner *geen*—these choices are illustrated in (1b), (3), and (5)—and also the relative order of *ook* and NEG, illustrated in (14).

(14) Dutch

- Ik heb geen vader meer*
I have NEG father anymore
- a. *en ik wil mijn moeder [ook niet]_{ADNEG} kwijt.*
[and]_{ADNEG} I want my mother [also NEG]_{ADNEG} lost
- b. *en ik wil [niet ook] mijn moeder kwijt.*
[and]_{ADNEG} I want [NEG also]_{ADNEG} my mother lost
- ‘I have no father anymore and I don’t want to lose my mother either.’

As (15) shows, the *min* strategy comes in many subtypes. We will discuss the main parameters in [Section 2.3.4](#).

(15) Dutch

- a. *Er was geen geld en evenmin voedsel.*
there was NEG money [and equally.little]_{ADNEG} food
- b. *Er was geld evenmin als voedsel.*
there was money [equally.little as]_{ADNEG} food
- c. *Er was evenmin geld als voedsel.*
there was [equally.little]_{ADNEG} money [as]_{ADNEG} food

- d. *Er was geld net zo min als voedsel.*
 there was money [just so little as]_{ADNEG} food
- e. *Er was geen geld en voedsel*
 there was NEG money [and]_{ADNEG} food
evenmin.
[equally.little]_{ADNEG}
 ‘There was neither money nor food.’

Then there are intermediate constructions, combining *ook* with *noch* or *min*.

- (16) Dutch (www.marxists.org/nederlands/marx-engels/1865/1865loonprijs.htm, accessed 22 October 2023)

De boeren konden... noch de waarde van de tarwe,
 the farmers could ADNEG the value of the wheat
noch ook zijn marktprijzen verhogen
 [ADNEG also]_{ADNEG} his market prices increase
 ‘The farmers couldn’t increase ... the value of the wheat nor its market prices.’

- (17) Dutch

(<https://forum.spaarinformatie.nl/icesave-f35/icesave-toekomst-niet-on-der-ned-depositogatrantiestelsel-t793.html>, accessed 22 October 2023)

Zonder die bescherming zou Landsbanki hier
 without that protection would Landsbanki here
helemaal niet kunnen werken en ook evenmin
 at.all NEG be.able work [and also equally.little]_{ADNEG}
worden toegelaten als bank.
 become admitted as bank
 ‘Without that protection Landsbanki would not be able to operate here at all and not be admitted as a bank either.’

The intermediate types are very infrequent, which we will show for the type illustrated in (16), which appears to be the most frequent of the infrequent intermediate types, but we will thereafter leave the intermediate types out of the discussion.

Table 2.1 documents the frequency of the three ‘pure’ construction types and the intermediate *noch ook* type in three corpora, viz. the nLTenTen20 corpus, a corpus of online present-day Dutch from various sources (discussion forums, blogs, Wikipedia, news sites, etc.; Jakubíček et al. 2013), the SoNaR corpus, documenting written Dutch from the 1950s onwards (Oostdijk et al. 2013), and the CGN corpus,

documenting present-day spoken Dutch (Dutch Language Union 2004).⁴ For *(en) ook* NEG we have only included the subtype with *ook* in front of NEG, so only the subtype shown in (14a) and not the one shown in (14b). The latter is infrequent.⁵ Table 2.1 shows the absolute frequencies and Table 2.2 recalculates them on 1,000,000 words.⁶

Table 2.1 Absolute frequencies

corpus	Σ words	<i>(en) ook</i> NEG	<i>noch</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>noch ook</i>
nlTenTen20	5,890,009,964	1,052,404	196,906	119,941	1,662
SoNaR	540,188,237	70,233	19,860	16,304	29
CGN	10,085,169	5,018	115	76	0

Table 2.2 Relative frequencies per 1,000,000 words

corpus	<i>(en) ook</i> NEG	<i>noch</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>noch ook</i>
nlTenTen20	178.68	33.43	20.36	0.28
SoNaR	130.02	36.76	30.18	0.05
CGN	497.56	11.40	7.54	0.00

We can draw the following conclusions. First, the *(en) ook* NEG strategy is by far the most frequent. It is about five and a half/three and a half times more frequent than *noch*, the second most frequent strategy, in the nlTenTen20/SoNaR corpora, and the difference is clearest in the spoken language; that is, the CGN, where the *(en) ook* NEG strategy is about 45 times more frequent than *noch*. Second, the differences between the *noch* and *min* strategies are modest, but *noch* is more frequent than *min*, especially in the nlTenTen20 corpus, where it occurs about one and a half times more often. Third, if we compare the written SoNaR corpus to the spoken CGN corpus, we see that *(en) ook* NEG is nearly four times more frequent in the spoken corpus, whereas the proportions are reversed for *noch* and *min* (*noch*

⁴ The first corpus was searched via SketchEngine (www.sketchengine.eu), the other two corpora via OpenSoNaR (<https://opensonar.ivdnt.org>).

⁵ In the nlTenTen20 corpus, for instance, there are 23,147 instances for *(en) NEG ook* against 1,052,404 for *(en) ook* NEG, which makes the latter about 45 times more frequent than the former.

⁶ It is important to stress that these numbers are mostly approximations: the strings were retrieved automatically; for strings with fewer than 200 hits, all instances were examined and irrelevant cases discarded; for every string with more hits, a random sample of 200 was analysed and irrelevant instances were tagged; and the proportions of relevant cases were extrapolated to the overall retrieval figures. Irrelevant hits include, among other things, *zo min mogelijk* ‘as little as possible’, *nog* ‘still’ misspelled as *noch* (their pronunciations are identical), and cases of *noch* before X (*noch* X *noch* Y would be counted twice otherwise).

is 3.2 times more frequent in the written corpus and *min* four times). We thus confirm the claim in the ANS (section 25.3.1) that *noch* is primarily used in written Dutch (the ANS does not comment on any preference for *min*). Fourth, as pointed out already, the intermediate strategy with *noch ook* is marginal.

2.3.2 Frequencies relative to the contextual parameters

In Figure 2.2 we report on the frequency of the three main strategies, viz. (*en*) *ook* NEG, *noch*, and *min*, relative to the distinction between phrasal, finite, clausal, phrasal-clausal, phrasal-elliptical, and elliptical uses. The numbers are based on random 100-hit samples, where that amount of data is available (for *min* in CGN there are only 76 attestations). The random samples for *min* are representative in the sense that they reflect the proportions of *evenmin* and *zomin/zo min*.⁷ For *noch*, we should point out again (see footnote 6) that we looked at the first 100 relevant cases of *noch* before Y so as not to bias the results towards *noch X noch Y*.

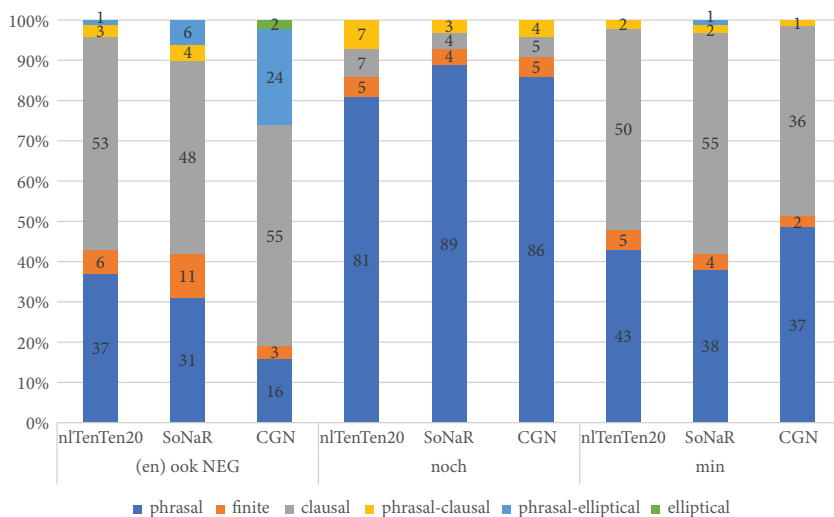


Figure 2.2 Profiling the strategies

Figure 2.2 shows that the three strategies have different profiles. The dominant use for *noch* is clearly phrasal, regardless of the corpus. The dominant uses for the *min* strategies are the phrasal and the clausal ones, with a potential difference between the corpora, but the differences are not statistically significant. The dominant uses

⁷ In SoNaR, for instance, *zomin* and *zo min* account for 11.16 per cent of the total number of hits and the SoNaR 100-hit sample therefore contains 11 instances.

for *(en) ook* NEG are clausal and phrasal—the main difference between the corpora is the higher number of (phrasal-)elliptical cases in the CGN and its higher occurrence in the CGN is due to the corpus’s spoken/interactive nature.

We also want to know what each context prefers. This is shown in Figure 2.3. It is based on the preceding tables and figures and therefore shares their approximative nature. Note that the elliptical category is missing for the nlTenTen20 and SoNaR corpora: in Figure 2.2 these corpora have no hits for this category.

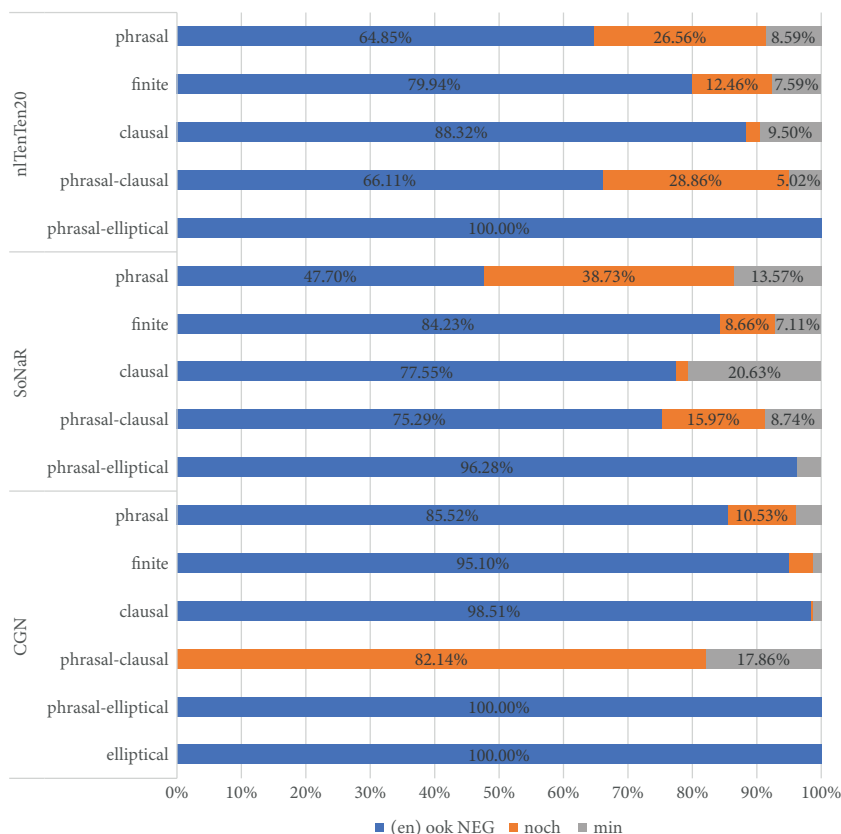


Figure 2.3 Profiling the contexts

While Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show that *(en) ook* NEG is the dominant strategy, we now see that it is the dominant one for each use.⁸ *(En) ook* NEG gets competition from *noch* mainly in the phrasal and the phrasal-clausal use, particularly in nlTenTen20 and SoNaR. As for the competition between *noch* and *min*: *noch* wins

⁸ The phrasal-clausal use in CGN appears to be an exception but it can be ignored. If the 100-hit sample for *(en) ook* NEG for this corpus had contained just a single phrasal-clause use, our extrapolation procedure would have given us a frequency of 50.8, compared to an extrapolated frequency for phrasal-clausal *noch* of 4.8 and an actual frequency for phrasal-clausal *min* of 1.

out in phrasal and phrasal-clausal uses and still tends to be slightly more frequent in finite uses but loses to *min* in clausal uses.

In what follows, we will zoom in on some aspects of the variation in usage of *noch* and *min* individually. The variation in the case of (*en*) *ook* NEG is less interesting and will not be discussed any further.

2.3.3 *Noch*

We limit ourselves to the variation found in the main use of *noch*, viz. the phrasal one. As illustrated in (1a) and (2), there are three patterns, viz. ADNEG X ADNEG Y, NEG X ADNEG Y, and X ADNEG Y. The X ADNEG Y pattern is typical in fixed combinations (ANS, section 25.3.1). These combinations have a meaning that is no longer compositional and the order of the X and Y constituents tends to be fixed. The examples in (18) come from the ANS. In these examples three of the four nouns (*kraai*, *heg*, *steg*) no longer have a transparent meaning. Our glosses render the older senses.

(18) Dutch (ANS, section 25.3.1)

- a. *kind* *noch* *kraai* *hebben*
child ADNEG crowing have
‘have no next of kin’, (lit.) ‘have neither children nor a rooster’
- b. *heg* *noch* *steg* *weten*
hedge ADNEG alley know
‘not know the area’, (lit.) ‘know neither hedge nor the alley’

This raises the question whether fixed expressions only go for the X ADNEG Y pattern. Table 2.3 surveys the alternation between fixed and nonfixed (‘free’) expressions for the 100-hit sample of Figure 2.2.

Table 2.3 *Noch*: free versus fixed phrasal constructions

Corpus	Total	ADNEG X ADNEG Y		NEG X ADNEG Y		X ADNEG Y	
		free	fixed	free	fixed	free	fixed
nlTenTen20	n = 81	32	0	28	0	15	6
SoNaR	n = 89	35	0	23	0	27	4
CGN	n = 86	44	2	17	0	7	16

Table 2.3 shows that the X ADNEG Y use is indeed strongly associated with fixed expressions, in the sense that fixed expressions overwhelmingly prefer the X ADNEG Y pattern. Also, fixed expressions are relatively more common in the spoken

register—compare the 16:7 ratio for CGN to the 4:27 ratio for SoNaR and the 6:15 ratio for nlTenTen20. But the X ADNEG Y pattern is by no means restricted to fixed expressions. In fact, in the nlTenTen20 and SoNaR corpora free expressions choosing the X ADNEG Y pattern are more common than the fixed ones and they are not particularly rare either. This means that it is not only because an expression is fixed that it prefers the X ADNEG Y pattern. Already Neckel (1912: 13), approvingly cited by Jespersen (1917: 109), has a hypothesis: when X and Y are close to each other, the ADNEG has a better chance to scope over both X and Y. This demands further study and perhaps this closeness is just one factor of many. One other such factor could relate to a principle formulated by Jespersen (1917: 5):

There is a natural tendency, also for the sake of clearness, to place the negative first, or at any rate as soon as possible, very often immediately before the particular word to be negated [sic] (generally the verb).

It has various names, including ‘Neg First’ principle (Horn 1989: 293) and, taking Jespersen’s hedges with *at any rate* and *very often* seriously, ‘Neg Early’ principle (van der Auwera 2022: 520). It has proven useful for at least three aspects of negation. First, it helps explain why clausal negators generally prefer the preverbal to the postverbal position (e.g. Krasnoukhova et al. 2021: 500). Second, the Neg Early principle is called upon to account for Romance-style non-strict negative concord (e.g. Haspelmath 1997: 206), the phenomenon that a negative indefinite must occur with a clausal negator when the negative indefinite follows the verb, but not when the negative indefinite precedes the verb. Third, the Neg Early principle is claimed to be relevant when we see that at least some languages with negative concord, whether strict or non-strict, allow phrasal additive negation with an X ADNEG Y pattern when the additive negation follows the verb but require ADNEG X ADNEG Y when it precedes the verb (van der Auwera 2021).⁹ What we see now is a fourth application—and even a double one.

For one thing, Neg Early could relate to the length of the X component: the longer the X is, the later the sole ADNEG of the X ADNEG X construction will be. Table 2.4 shows the length (in numbers of words) of the X and Y components for each of the three patterns with *noch* as the in-between ADNEG. One can see here that the X ADNEG Y cases always have a shorter X than the ADNEG X ADNEG Y and NEG X ADNEG Y cases, regardless of whether the former are free or fixed expressions, suggesting that, for longer Xs, an initial negation is preferred.

For another thing, as suggested by Moeyaert et al. (1986: 122), the position of the additive negation relative to the verb could be important. Compare sentence (19) to (20).

⁹ Note that Neg Early has also been claimed to be crosslinguistically stronger in imperatives than in declaratives, but this hypothesis turns out to be false (Van Olmen 2021).

Table 2.4 The length of X in ADNEG X ADNEG, NEG X ADNEG Y, and X ADNEG Y constructions

Corpus	Total	ADNEG X ADNEG Y		NEG X ADNEG Y		X ADNEG Y	
		free	fixed	free	fixed	free	fixed
nlTenTen20	n = 81	3.13	n/a	4.50	n/a	1.93	1.00
SoNaR	n = 89	2.66	n/a	2.87	n/a	1.67	1.00
CGN	n = 86	2.68	1.00	3.00	n/a	1.43	1.00

(19) Dutch

De mensen die we gisteren gezien hebben noch de
the people that we yesterday seen have ADNEG the
mensen die we morgen gaan zien zijn bijzonder te
people that we tomorrow go see are special to
noemen.
name

‘Neither the people that we saw yesterday nor the people that we will see tomorrow are to be called special.’

(20) Dutch

?Ik ken de mensen die we gisteren gezien hebben
I know the people that we yesterday seen have
noch de dieren die we morgen gaan zien.
ADNEG the animals that we tomorrow go see

‘I know neither the people that we saw yesterday nor the animals that we will see tomorrow.’

In both, the X component is very long, but (19) is much better than (20). The reason is, we propose, that the ADNEG of (19) still precedes the main clause verb and the one in (20) does not. In (19) the lack of an initial *noch* does not cause any processing problem; that is, we know from the *noch* between X and Y that the sentence is negative. (20) is more difficult to process, for *ik ken de mensen die we gisteren gezien hebben* could initially be interpreted as a positive clause.

2.3.4 *Min*

Next to the *noch* and (*en*) *ook* NEG constructions there is a third set of constructions, all containing the element *min* ‘less’. Although originally a comparative (www.etymologie.nl, accessed 10 August 2023), *min* now occurs as part of a

new comparative *minder* ‘less’ and there is also a superlative *minst* ‘least’. On its own, *min* functions in the predicative adjectival phrase *te min* meaning ‘inferior, insignificant’, as an adverb or adjective in phrases like *zo min mogelijk* ‘as little as possible’, and as part of *min of meer* ‘more or less’ and *niettemin* ‘nevertheless’. In what follows, we first survey the 118 hits in the phrasal 100-hit samples of Figure 2.2. We rephrase the examples to mean ‘there was no money and no food either’. In (21) we list the attestations corresponding to *geen geld* (NEG X) and in (22) the ones corresponding with *geld* (X).

(21) Dutch

<i>Er</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>geen</i>	<i>geld</i>	...	
there	was	NEG	money		
a.	en	evenmin	<i>voedsel</i> .		32
	and	equally.little	food		
b.	en	<i>voedsel</i>	evenmin.		15
	and	food	equally.little		
c.	evenmin	als	<i>voedsel</i> .		14
	equally.little	as	food		
d.	, <i>voedsel</i>	evenmin.			13
	food	equally.little			
e.	net	zo min	als <i>voedsel</i> .		9
	just	as little	as food		
f.	, evenmin	<i>voedsel</i> .			8
	equally.little	food			
g.	net	zomin	als <i>voedsel</i> .		6
	just	as.little	as food		
h.	net	zo min	<i>voedsel</i> .		1
	just	as little	food		
i.	zo min	als	<i>voedsel</i> .		1
	as little	as	food		

‘There was no money and no food either’.

(22) Dutch

<i>Er</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>geld</i>	...	
there	was	money		
a.	evenmin	als	<i>voedsel</i> .	12
	equally.little	as	food	

- b.

net

zo min

als

voedsel.

4
- just

as little

as

food
- c.

net

zomin

als

voedsel.

3
- just

as.little

as

food
- ‘There was no money and no food either’

The first thing to note is that the *min* strategies show extensive variation. The parameters are described in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Parameters of variation for the *min* constructions

Does the construction use ...	Findings
NEG X or X?	NEG X: 99 vs. X: 19
<i>min</i> Y or Y <i>min</i> ?	<i>min</i> Y: 90 vs. Y <i>min</i> : 28
<i>even</i> or <i>zo</i> ?	<i>even</i> : 94 vs. <i>zo</i> : 24
<i>evenmin</i> or <i>even min</i> ?	<i>evenmin</i> : 94 vs. <i>even min</i> : 0
<i>en</i> or no <i>en</i> ?	<i>en</i> : 47 vs. no <i>en</i> : 71
<i>zomin/zo min als</i> Y or <i>zomin/zo min</i> Y?	<i>zomin/zo min als</i> Y: 23 vs. <i>zomin/zo min</i> Y: 1
<i>net zomin/zo min</i> or <i>zomin/zo min</i> ?	<i>net zomin/zo min</i> : 23 vs. <i>zomin/zo min</i> : 1
<i>evenmin als</i> Y or <i>evenmin</i> Y?	<i>evenmin als</i> Y: 26 vs. <i>evenmin</i> Y: 32
<i>zomin</i> or <i>zo min</i> ?	<i>zomin</i> : 9 vs. <i>zo min</i> : 15
<i>net zomin</i> or <i>net zo min</i> ?	<i>net zomin</i> : 9 vs. <i>net zo min</i> : 14

The second thing is that for most parameters there are clear preferences. Thus in most constructions X is preceded by a negator, *min* precedes Y much more often than it follows Y, *even* is more frequent than *zo*, *evenmin* is always written together and *zomin* not even in half of the attestations (and the presence of *net* has no effect on the choice), the constructions usually do not contain an explicit *en* conjunction, and *zomin* and *zo min* constructions overwhelmingly cooccur with *als*, different from *evenmin* constructions, in which *als* occurs in less than half of the attestations.

Third, some of the parameters are connected. Thus, (i) *en* and *als* do not cooccur, (ii) when X does not have a negator, then Y is preceded by *min*, and (iii) when *min* follows Y, then we see *even* but no *als*.

Some of the findings can be related to earlier accounts. First, we confirm the claim in the ANS (section 25.12.1) that the construction with *even* is more common than the one with *zo*. Second, we also confirm the ANS claim that the *zo* variant occurs more often with *net* than without (ANS, section 25.12.1). Third, we disagree with the ANS claim that the *zo* version with *net* is less formal than the one without *net* (ANS, section 25.12.1; see <https://taaladvies.net/evenmin-als-jij-ga-ik-daar-niet-naartoe> too, accessed 10 August 2023). Figure 2.4 sketches the

distribution of the two variants in the text types of the entire SoNaR corpus. *Net zomin* has 90 per cent frequency in all text types. Furthermore, the discussion lists are the text type with a substantial number of hits that has the higher percentage of just *zomin*.

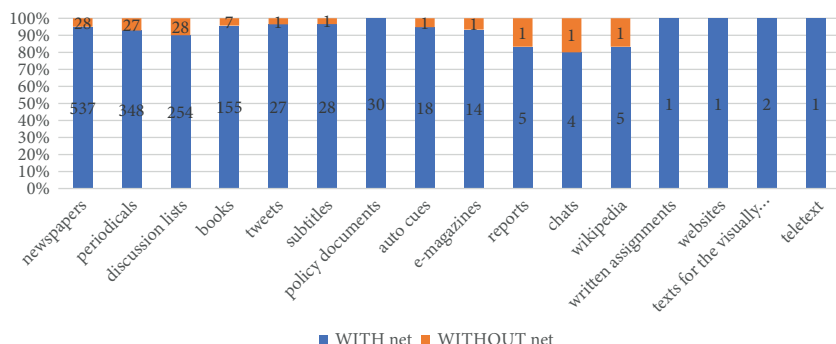


Figure 2.4 *Zomin/zomin* with and without *net* in the SoNaR corpus

Fourth, we found *zo min* to be more frequent than *zomin*. This is a peculiar finding. The ANS only lists the *zomin* form. As the dataset illustrated in (21) and (22) is limited, we surveyed the distribution of the two forms in the entire SoNaR corpus (see Figure 2.5). The complete lack of any pattern (e.g. newspapers vs. periodicals, tweets vs. discussion lists) suggests that many writers do not know how to write it. We also hypothesize that any tendency for univerbation of *zo* and *min* is obstructed by the *zo min* + adjective/adverb pattern *zo min mogelijk* ‘as little as possible’. This construction overwhelmingly uses *zo min* rather than *zomin* (the SoNaR corpus has 1,129 attestations of *zo min mogelijk* vs. only five of *zomin mogelijk*). Finally, the discussion in Broekhuis and Corver (2019: 215) implicitly takes *evenmin* to be as separable as *zomin*, but this is not the case.

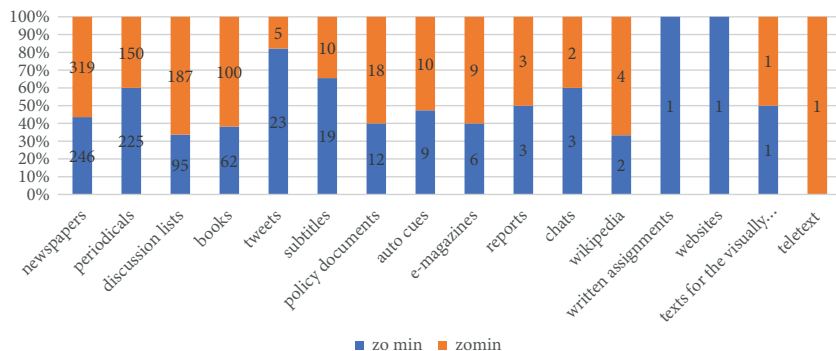


Figure 2.5 *Zo min* vs *zomin* in the SoNaR corpus

It is important to stress that the search reported on in (21) and (22) is limited to the 118 cases in the random 100-hit samples. The corpora show more variation—and thus more parameters. We also find *min* constructions in front of X, such as the ones illustrated in (23).

(23) Dutch

a.	<i>Er</i>	<i>was</i>	{	evenmin	}	<i>geld</i>	<i>als</i>	<i>voedsel.</i>
	there	was	{	equally.little	}	money	as	food
b.			{	<i>net zomin</i>	}			
			{	just so.little	}			

‘There was no money and no food either.’

A final note is that all the occurrences of *evenmin* and *zomin/zo min* illustrated so far only have the additive negation sense, even though the components are transparent and suggest the ‘equally little’ or ‘so little’ senses. We will discuss this in Section 2.4.2.

2.3.5 Conclusion

The main findings of this synchronic investigation are the following. First, present-day additive negation can be expressed with three types of constructions. Second, the most frequent strategy uses (*en*) *ook* NEG, followed ‘at a great distance’ by both *noch* and then *min*, in each of the three corpora and for most of the six context types. Third, (*en*) *ook* NEG is found much more often in the spoken corpus than in the written one and for *noch* and *min* the proportions are reversed. Fourth, each type comes in subtypes. For *noch* it is most remarkable that there is a subtype that is dedicated to fixed expressions in the spoken register. For *min* it is the sheer number of subtypes that strikes the eye. In the next section, we will attempt to make sense of some of the synchronic variation by bringing in diachrony.

2.4 The diachrony of Dutch additive negation

In this section we turn to the diachrony of Dutch additive negation. Although what is necessary is a focused diachronic corpus study, our knowledge of the present-day constructions in combination with some observations from the literature and some snapshot diachronic searches do allow us to frame some diachronic hypotheses.

2.4.1 *Noch* and *(en) ook* NEG

Noch is composed of the negator *n(e)* and an additive particle, possibly *-(u)h* ‘also, and’, much like Latin *neque* derives from *ne* and *-k^we*, (<https://etymologiebank.nl/trefwoord/noch>, accessed 27 March 2023; Salaberri 2023b). According to the dictionary of Old Dutch (before 1200) (<https://ivdnt.org/woordenboeken/oudnederlands-woordenboek>, accessed 2 April 2024), the *-(u)h* particle no longer occurs on its own and we only see the univerbation *noh*.

- (24) Old Dutch (<https://etymologiebank.nl/trefwoord/noch>, accessed 27 March 2023)

<i>ne</i>	<i>sint</i>	<i>spraken</i>	<i>noh</i>	<i>woorth</i>
NEG	are	languages	ADNEG	words

‘there are neither languages nor words’

Assuming that *-(u)* was once an independent element, we can think of the diachrony of *noch* as developing from *ne* and *(u)h* as a cycle, as in Figure 2.6. In a first stage there is a meaning that is expressed by a strategy, then we get an intermediate stage with a competition between two strategies, and in the third stage we return to expressing this meaning with just one strategy, viz. the new one.

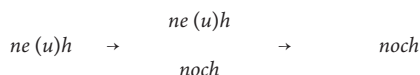


Figure 2.6 A *noch* cycle

There is no trace of *(en) ook* NEG in Old Dutch, but that does not mean that it did not occur, for the relevant dictionaries focus on words, not phrases and, more generally, Old Dutch is poorly documented.¹⁰ *(En) ook* NEG is attested since at least Middle Dutch (1200–1300).

- (25) Middle Dutch

(<https://gtb.ivdnt.org/iWDB/search?actie%3Darticle%26wdb%3DMNW%26id%3D39046%26lemmodern%3Dook%26domein%3D0%26con%3Dtrue>, lemma 6)

<i>Ende</i>	<i>wilde</i>	<i>ook</i>	<i>bliven</i>	<i>niet</i>
and	wanted	also	stay	NEG

‘and neither did ... want to stay’

¹⁰ Nevertheless, Van der Horst (2008: 270–271) reports the existence of a two-word form *ne oh*, but he speculates that this construction is influenced by Old High German. If this *oh* is the ancestor of German *auch* and Dutch *ook* (see Behaghel 1928: 218), then the *ne oh* construction can be seen as an ancestor of *ook niet*—a short-lived one, for *ne* would be replaced by *niet*.

It is safe to assume that *noch* is older than (*en*) *ook* NEG. We hypothesize that (*en*) *ook* NEG will then be a newcomer and gradually increase in frequency and surpass *noch*. We had a snapshot look at the Corpus Oudnederlands, the Corpus Gysseling (Early Middle Dutch), the Corpus Middelnederlands, and the Couranten Corpus, as well as the Brieven als Buit Corpus (Early Modern Dutch) ([Instituut voor de Nederlandse Taal 2024](#)).¹¹ The results are shown in [Figure 2.7](#) and they confirm our hypothesis.

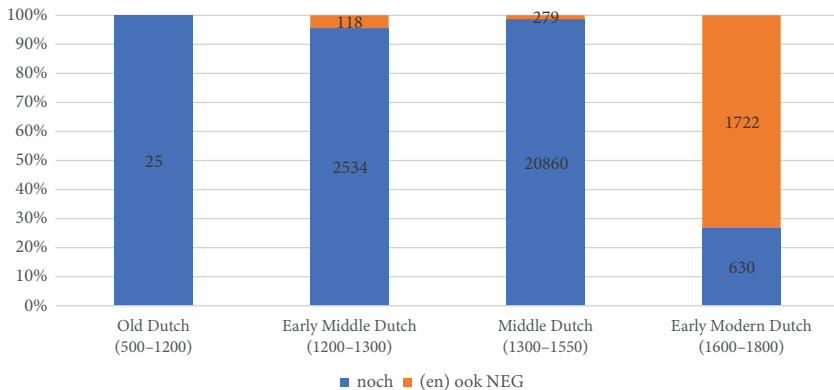


Figure 2.7 *Noch* and (*en*) *ook* NEG from Old Dutch to Early Modern Dutch

We also looked at the word frequency list for the spoken subcorpus [Uit den Boogaart \(1975\)](#), for which we can compare the data to the CGN data that concerns more recent material.¹² This subcorpus contains around 120,000 words documenting the Dutch language in the 1960s. There are four attestations of *noch* occurring with an Y constituent ([Uit den Boogaart 1975: 137](#)). Recalculated on 1,000,000 words, this gives us 33.33 attestations. Compared to the CGN data (see [Table 2.2](#)), this would suggest that the frequency of *noch* decreased from 33.33 to 11.40.

Nowadays, the *noch* variant is mostly found in written Dutch, in contrast with (*en*) *ook* NEG (see [Tables 2.1](#) and [2.2](#)). In the same vein, [Broekhuis and Corver \(2019: 8, 190–191, 211\)](#) consider *noch* a feature of a formal register. This is in harmony with the idea that *ceteris paribus* change happens first in informal registers and that older constructions survive longer in the formal register—and in fixed phrases (see [Table 2.3](#)). We can thus think of the competition between *noch* and

¹¹ We searched for the lemmas ‘noch’ and ‘ne’ + ‘ook’ for the *noch* figures and for ‘ook’ + ‘niet/geen’ for (*en*) *ook* NEG. For Middle Dutch we relied on a variety of spellings, e.g. *ook|oc|ock|oic|oick|ooc|oock* for *ook*. For *noch* this is problematic because it could be confused with *nog* ‘still’ and here we manually controlled 100 random instances and extrapolated the percentages of cases meaning ‘neither’ to the total number of hits.

¹² There is also a written subcorpus, but this cannot be compared to our written corpus, i.e. the SoNaR corpus, for the latter contains materials from the 1950s on.

one construction. But the stages are not identical: A1 has two words and A3 one whereas on the B cycle it is the first stage that has one word and the last one has two. In the Jespersen Cycle, as shown in Figure 2.9, each first and last stage has one word. If one takes this kind of similarity to be criterial for a change to constitute a cycle, then the changes from *ne uh* to *noch* and from *noch* to *(en) ook* NEG are not cycles. We understand similarity in a wider sense, but it is true that the first and last stages of the Jespersen Cycle show a higher degree of similarity than the ones of the *noch*–*(en) ook* NEG cycles. It is to be noted also that Figure 2.9 is a simplification. Thus Latin not only had *ne* and *non* but also *haud*, which disappeared and was not renewed (Magni and Orlandini 2017), and in French *pas* was not the only minimizer that was developing into a clausal negator, the most important alternatives being *point* and especially *mie* (Muller 1991: 153–154; Hansen 2018c). In this respect the Jespersen Cycle and the *noch*–*(en) ook* NEG cycle are similar again, for the representation of the latter in Figure 2.9 is also a simplification: it does not show the *min* strategies yet—we will come to them in Section 2.4.2. Third, because Figure 2.9 shows a succession of two cycles, we also see that the change from stage A1 to A3 is similar to the change from B1 to B3. The similarity of the changes derives from the similarity of their first and last stages. This trivially holds for the *noch*–*(en) ook* NEG cycles, too. Fourth, the similarity of the intermediate stages (i.e. stages A2 and B2) can be less strong. For the Jespersen Cycles, they both involve a minimal unit, with *oenum* ‘one’ in Latin and *pas* ‘step’ in French, but in A2 we see univerbation, yet not in B2. If we look at more languages, we see that the similarity of the intermediate stages may be reduced further (van der Auwera et al. 2022: 617, 618). What happens in the second stage is interesting and certainly not random, but at a crosslinguistic level the similarity of the intermediate stages is trivial: it is the stage through which a language goes from one strategy to a different yet similar strategy and it harbours their competition. As for the *noch*–*(en) ook* NEG cycles, the similarity in the intermediate stages is also limited (A2 again shows univerbation and B2 does not) and in both A2 and B2 we see competition. Fifth, we are allowed to hypothesize ‘incomplete’ cycles (e.g. Vossen 2016), though not light-heartedly: one needs language-internal and/or crosslinguistic data, suggesting the potential of completion. We see an incomplete Jespersen Cycle in Standard French, which has not shed *ne*. With *noch*–*(en) ook* NEG we also see an incomplete cycle: stage B3 with only the *(en) ook* NEG choice has not been reached. Sixth, Hansen (e.g. 2018a, 2020b) makes a distinction between onomasiological and semasiological cycles and we can describe both Jespersen and *noch*–*(en) ook* NEG in these terms. All cycles are onomasiological and some are semasiological as well (Hansen 2020b, 172). For both types the first stage is defined in terms of a meaning. The label ‘semasiological’ is relevant only when two or more cycles are compared, and they are called ‘semasiological’ when the first stages of the two or more cycles involve identical or etymologically closely related constructions. Hansen applies the distinction to pragmatic cycles, but we agree that a morphosyntactic cycle

such as the Jespersen Cycle is ‘driven’ by pragmatics (Hansen 2020b: 167) and that the distinction can also be applied to the Jespersen Cycles. This implies then that the Jespersen Cycles are, trivially, onomasiological and, just in case the first stages of two or more Jespersen Cycles use an identical or etymologically related form, the cycles are semasiological as well. Thus we can recognize the Latin–French Jespersen Cycles as semasiological: the Latin A1 is etymologically related to the French B1 stage. As for the two *noch*–(en) *ook* NEG cycles, they are semasiological too: the additive and negative components of stages A1 and B1 are etymologically related.

An interesting difference between *noch* and (en) *ook* NEG is that (en) *ook* NEG is possible only in the Y domain. This makes sense, for (en) *ook* NEG is transparently additive (i.e. anaphoric); it ‘looks back’ at the X element and adds an Y element. We hypothesize that the NEG X ADNEG Y construction is older than the ADNEG X ADNEG Y and X ADNEG Y constructions. As for the relative age of the latter two constructions, we hypothesize that the ADNEG X ADNEG Y pattern is older than the X ADNEG Y pattern: the latter is arguably more complex in that the middle ADNEG is both cataphoric and anaphoric, it is crosslinguistically rarer (Haspel-math 2007: 18; Salaberri 2022: 668), and in Dutch its use is more restricted.¹³ To check these hypotheses, we looked at *noch* in the Corpus Oudnederlands, the Corpus Gysseling (Early Middle Dutch), the Corpus Middelnederlands, and the Couranten Corpus, as well as at Brieven als Buit Corpus (Early Modern Dutch). We collected all instances in Old Dutch and a random sample of 50 cases of *noch* for Early Middle Dutch, Middle Dutch, and Early Modern Dutch. The results are shown in Figure 2.10.

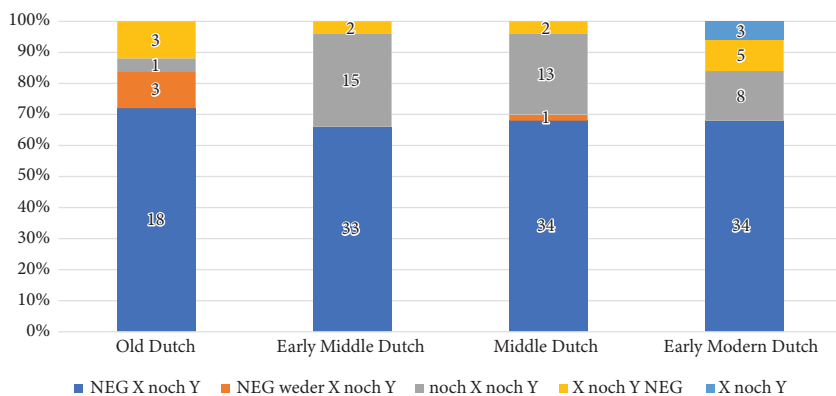


Figure 2.10 *Noch* patterns from Old Dutch to Early Dutch

¹³ In Latin the X ADNEG Y is claimed to be a later development (Gianollo 2018: 234–235).

Figure 2.10 shows a complicated picture, with attestations of an ADNEG form *weder* and a clausal negator that precedes *weder X noch Y* and, mainly in subordinate clauses, follows *X noch Y*. Nevertheless, the data support our hypotheses: (i) Old Dutch only has one case of *noch X noch Y* (this may be a coincidence, but at least the better coverage of the later periods shows this pattern to be more frequent); (ii) *X noch Y* without a clausal negator only shows up in Early Modern Dutch.

2.4.2 *Min*

Now we come to the *min* constructions. The lemma in the WNT (*Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* ‘Dictionary of the Dutch Language’) for *evenmin*, written in 1918, gives two meanings, viz. the additive negation meaning as well as the meaning ‘equally little’, suggested by the components *even* and *min*. The WNT lemma for *zomin* from 1996 gives ‘equally little’ too, as well as *evenmin*, which, as we have just seen, is listed with two meanings. In the ANS, however, only the additive negation meaning is mentioned and the same is true for Van der Heijden (1999: 84) and Broekhuis and Corver (2019: 106). Language advice sites also only mention the additive negation meaning for *evenmin* and *zomin* (www.vandale.nl/taaltip-is-het-net-zo-min-of-net-zomin; www.vlaanderen.be/taaladvies/taaladviezen/evenmin-als-niet, both accessed 19 April 2023). So we may assume that there has been a semantic change, in which the additive negation sense has become either the only sense or the dominant one.

The lemmas and observations just discussed only concern the one-word constructions. These are fairly recent. The lemmas in the WNT give 1857 and 1869 as the first attestations of the univerbations (see also <https://etymologiebank.nl/trefwoord/evenmin>, accessed 28 March 2023), for *even* and *zo*, respectively. It is clear that the earlier two-word constructions allowed the additive negation interpretation, too. (26) is an example from 1814.

- (26) Dutch (www.dbnl.org/tekst/neuf002klei01_01/neuf002klei01_01_0240.php, accessed 30 October 2023)

Mogen alle dit gelooven, gij mijne lieve zult er
 may all this believe you my dear will there
zeker niet aan twijfelen, even min als aan mijn vurig
 surely NEG at doubt equally little as at my fiery
verlangen, dat ik goede tijdingen van u bekomen.
 desire that I good tidings from you get

‘May all believe this, you my dear ones will surely not doubt, and no less / neither at my strong desire, that I get good tidings from you.’

It is tempting to follow the present-day discussions and claim that the additive negative sense is now the only one. At least, all of the examples given so far only allow the additive negation sense. Yet, the ‘equally little’ sense is still available. We see it in (27).

(27) Dutch

Een zweetkuur hielp weinig, evenmin als een
 a sweat cure helped little equally.little as a

aderlating.
 bloodletting

‘A sweat cure helped little, as little as a bloodletting.’

In (27) the X domain contains an explicit *weinig* ‘little’ element and *evenmin* ‘equally.little’ immediately follows *weinig*. These two features would seem to be important. Without the preceding marking of a low degree like *weinig*, the etymological reading is not possible, and when the *min* construction is separated from this marking, it becomes more difficult.

(28) Dutch

Een zweetkuur heeft weinig voor die mensen kunnen
 a sweat cure has little for those people can

doen evenmin als een aderlating.
 do equally.little as a bloodletting.’

??‘A sweat cure has done little for these people, as little as a bloodletting.’

Here is our hypothesis on how the change took place. Consider (21a) again.

(21) a. *Er was geen geld en evenmin voedsel.*
 there was NEG money and equally.little food

‘There was no money and no food either.’

The original and still transparent meaning of *evenmin* is ‘as little as’. In (21a) the X part of the sentence says that there was no money. When the Y part literally says that there was as little food as money, this entails that there was no food either. This makes a context like that of (21a), a NEG X ADNEG Y context, a bridging context:¹⁴ it allows both the old ‘equally little’ reading and the additive negation reading. Note

¹⁴ The term is due to Evans and Wilkins (2000) and spread in large measure due to Heine (2002)—the same idea is also expressed in, for example, Diewald (2002) and, in an early generative framework, in Hankamer (1977). A bridging context is a context that allows two analyses, one reflecting the older use and the other the incoming one.

that contexts without a negative in the X domain, such as (22a) and (23a), are not bridging contexts.

- (22) a. *Er was geld evenmin als voedsel.*
 there was money equally.little as food
 ‘There was no money and no food either.’

- (23) a. *Er was evenmin geld als voedsel.*
 there was equally.little money as food
 ‘There was no money and no food either.’

Given the original meaning of *evenmin*, the sentences should mean that there was as little money as food. This is not what they mean. We hypothesize that the additive negation use that we see in (22a) and (23a) became available after the additive negative established itself in uses such as (21a).

The additive negation interpretation that we hypothesize to have emerged in a bridging context is a context-dependent one. This makes it similar to a semantic change based on implicature. However, an implicature-based interpretation is inherently cancellable. We can illustrate this with the additive negation found in English, possibly first drawn attention to by Jespersen (1917: 110, 112) and named ‘negative connexion’ by him. The example is ours.

- (29) Fred didn’t like Lutherans *any more* than the Pope did.

The literal meaning has Fred not liking Lutherans more than the Pope. There is also an additive negation interpretation, viz. an implicature that Fred didn’t like Lutherans, but this depends on the assumption that the Pope didn’t like Lutherans. This additive negation interpretation in (29) is cancellable: it is perfectly possible that the Pope does like Lutherans, at least to some extent. The additive negation reading with Dutch *min* constructions illustrated in (21) to (23) is not cancellable.¹⁵ In ongoing work on French and Spanish additive negative construction, Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen has suggested the term ‘discourse entailment’ for the noncancellable yet context-dependent interpretation, which will eventually become conventionalized (van der Auwera et al. 2023).

We do not know when the new sense developed. But given that the change has not been completed yet and that the univerbation took place in the mid-19th century, which for *zomin* has not been completed either (see Figure 2.5), it is possible

¹⁵ Another difference between the English *not any more* and the Dutch *min* constructions is that the Dutch ones scope over the Y constituents and the English ones over the X constituents.

that the additive negation sense was consolidated only in the nineteenth century. Given that the *min* strategies are strongly associated with the written register, we hypothesize that it started there. Its frequency in the spoken register is still much lower than in the written register (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2).¹⁶ In the written register the frequency is, of course, also low—albeit less low—and thus the grammaticalization of the *min* connective will constitute a good example of a low-frequency grammaticalization (cf. Hoffmann 2005).

When the *min* strategies developed, they joined the *noch* and (*en*) *ook* NEG strategies. We must thus put the *noch*–(*en*) *ook* NEG cycles, represented in Figure 2.8, in a wider context. Figure 2.11 sketches the current situation. The ovals represent the A and B cycles of Figure 2.8, with the latter only shown in its current incomplete shape.

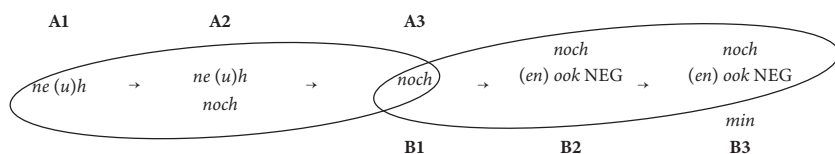


Figure 2.11 The additive negation cycles in a wider context

What will happen in the future is unclear. For some time to come, the three current strategies or, better, sets of strategies will co-exist, though there are context-dependent differences (Figure 2.2). If, at some point, (*en*) *ook* NEG prevails, then the B cycle will come to its conclusion. If, at some point, the *min* strategies oust both *noch* and (*en*) *ook* NEG, we can posit another cycle, with *noch* as the first stage and *min* as the last one. A future scenario ending with only the *min* strategies is currently unlikely:¹⁷ the frequencies of the *min* strategies are just too low. Even for the clausal use, the one in which the *min* strategies made ‘most progress’, the *min* strategies are still much less frequent than the (*en*) *ook* NEG strategies (see Figure 2.3).

Thus the only change in the realm of Dutch additive negation for which we can now hypothesize cyclicity is the one from *ne (u)h* to *noch*. That does not make the intrusion of *min*, which disturbs the projected conclusion of the B cycle, any less interesting and there is also no need to attribute a higher significance to pure cyclical changes. Do we exaggerate the importance of cyclical change? Is a cycle perhaps only an ‘illusory epiphenomenon’ or is ‘cycle’ only another word for ‘grammaticalization chain’ (Givón 2016: 253)? This is too drastic: if a change takes a language to

¹⁶ In the spoken *Uit den Boogaart* (1975) subcorpus *min* did not occur at all.

¹⁷ In French and Spanish, however, the counterparts *non plus* ‘no more’ and *tampoco* ‘so, little’ are much more successful (van der Auwera et al. 2023).

a stage that is similar in a nontrivial way to an initial stage, it is worthwhile having a label for it and ‘cycle’ is an acceptable label.

Finally, the representation in Figure 2.11 does not reflect that at present—that is, at the B3 stage—the three strategies have different frequencies, overall and relative to register and context (Tables 2.1 and 2.2 and Figures 2.2 and 2.3). Overall, *(en) ook* NEG is vastly more frequent: it is now the default strategy, the canonical one. *Noch* and *min* are ‘satellites’, *noch* being the stronger one—except for the clausal context. Koch and Oesterreicher (1996) and Detges (2020) use the term ‘satellite’ only for the younger competitors to the canonical construction, so, in this context, only for the *min* constructions. We see no reason for denying the label to the *noch* constructions: *min* and *noch* both hover around frequency levels far removed from that of *(en) ook* NEG. About the younger satellites, Detges (2020) stresses that they typically come in many variants. This is definitely the case for the *min* strategy. Detges (2020) also argues that normally many of the variants will disappear and that the eventual replacement of a canonical form by a satellite is in fact a very special and relatively rare case. If it does happen, we have a real cycle—in Detges’s terms, ‘a full cycle’. So from this point of view, too, there is no need to drop the notion of ‘cycle’, but we should be aware of its limitations.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter we defined a notion of additive negation which captures the meaning of constructions like English *neither ... nor*. We surveyed the three types of constructions that express additive negation in present-day Dutch. One involves the element *noch* ‘neither/nor’, another the phrase *ook niet/geen* ‘also not/no’, and a third one uses the element *min* (lit.) ‘little’. We described parameters of variation and frequencies. We then framed hypotheses about their diachronies. We focused on two issues: (i) the process through which a phrase meaning ‘equally/as little’ acquires the additive negation meaning through what we termed a ‘discourse entailment’ and (ii) the extent to which we can use the term ‘cycle’ to capture the diachronies.

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The role of pragmatics in the cyclical renewal and reinforcement of demonstratives from Latin to Italian

Chiara Fedriani and Piera Molinelli

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the development of demonstratives from Latin to Italian in terms of a possible pragmatic cycle and analyses a recent development in contemporary Italian, viz. the emergence of reinforced demonstratives, in relation to the framework of cycles. Specifically, we argue that some major diachronic changes that Latin and Italian demonstratives underwent may be interpreted as phases of an onomasiological pragmatic cycle; that is, a cyclical renewal whereby the same function came to be expressed over time by different forms whose original source is similar, functionally competing for a while and gradually replacing one another (cf. [Ghezzi and Molinelli 2016](#); [Hansen 2018a](#)). In addition to verifying the existence and nature of this cyclical change, the study aims to assess the role of pragmatic motivations in triggering and constraining its historical development, also considering the interaction of pragmatic factors with different patterns of language change such as reinforcement and subjectification. We then focus on the recent development, in contemporary Italian, of reinforced demonstratives; that is, demonstratives strengthened by the addition of a locative adverb (e.g. *questo qui* ‘this here’). We argue that these complex forms specialized pragmatically as expressions of the speaker’s stance, expanding from their original core meaning of spatial deixis to the discursive subjective sphere, where in some contexts they can express deliberate distancing from negatively evaluated referents. Based on these premises, another aim of this chapter is to provide a first corpus-based account of Italian reinforced demonstratives and their subjectification in recent times, with a view to verifying whether they fit a broader process of cyclical renewal that has extended over a time span of approximately 2,000 years.

In the literature, so-called demonstrative cycles have been mostly investigated in terms of demonstratives developing into grammatical markers, such as personal

pronouns, definite articles, and case endings (see, e.g. [Greenberg 1978](#); [Lyons 1999](#); van [Gelderen 2011](#): 197–202) and, in the domain of Romance languages, with a focus on French (e.g. [Marchello-Nizia 2006](#); van [Gelderen 2011](#): 219–224). In this study, by contrast, we investigate different historical phases whereby older demonstratives have recurrently been replaced by *equi-functional forms* resulting in items *with the same categorial status*; and we do so by focusing on the long diachrony of two understudied languages in relation to this topic, Latin and Italian.

This development implies two major cyclical changes. The first is a *cyclical reorganization of the number of distinctions* involved in the demonstrative system. In Latin, the system was originally tripartite (*hic* ‘this’, *iste* ‘that of yours’, *ille* ‘that’); Late Latin had a bipartite system (*iste* ‘this’ vs. *ille* ‘that’); Old Italian restored a deictic trichotomy (*questo* ‘this’, *codesto* ‘that of yours’, *quello* ‘that’); and in contemporary Italian we have a further simplification to two terms (*questo* ‘this’, *quello* ‘that’, with the exception of Tuscan, Sardinian, and other varieties mainly spoken in central and southern Italy: see [Ledgeway 2015](#)). These major changes are summarized in [Table 3.1](#).¹

Table 3.1 Cyclical alternation in deictic distinctions

	Proximal	Medial	Distal
Early to Postclassical Latin	HIC	ISTE	ILLE
Late Latin		ISTE	ILLE
Old Italian	QUESTO	CODESTO	QUELLO
Contemporary Italian		QUESTO	QUELLO

Secondly, this change is characterized by a *cyclical renewal of forms* strengthened by means of deictic elements (a process felicitously named *re-deictization* in [Marchello-Nizia 2006](#)). In a nutshell, the main steps of the cycle are as follows. In Latin, there was a functional competition between a simple form, *is* ‘he’, and the morphologically reinforced forms *hic* and *iste* ‘this’, the latter gradually replacing the other two. Over the centuries, in spoken Latin, as far as it can be glimpsed through several written non-literary documents,² a new form emerged through the agglutination of a deictic element, *eccu(m)* ‘here it

¹ In this chapter, we follow the periodization of the Latin language and literature drawn from [Cuzolin and Haverling \(2009: 20\)](#), who distinguish between Early (ca. 240–90 BCE), Classical (90 BCE–14 CE), Postclassical (14–ca. 200 CE), and Late Latin (ca. 200–600 CE). As for the periodization of the historical development of Italian, we distinguish between three major phases: Old Italian, which spans from the documents of the origins (9th–10th century) to the death of Boccaccio (1375); Modern Italian, running from the end of the 14th century to political unification (1861), a period in which Italian gradually became a common literary language, with the establishment in the 16th century of a norm based on 14th-century literary Florentine; and contemporary Italian, from the unification to the contemporary age, when Italian became the language of national use.

² The difficulty of studying Latin taking into account its varieties across the centuries is well known (cf. [Molinelli 2025](#)).

is!'; Italian, like many other Romance languages, inherited this form (e.g. It. *questo* < ECCU(M)-ISTU(M) 'this'). A third phase of deictic intensification is documented in contemporary Italian, where demonstratives, as we have anticipated above, can be optionally reinforced by a locative adverb under certain pragmatic circumstances.

We thus employ the term *renewal* with reference to a process whereby 'existing meanings take on new forms' (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 122). Since the demonstratives under scrutiny are recurrently renewed through formal (morpho-phonetic) and functional (pragmatic) *reinforcement*, we follow Vindenes (2018b: 644) and refer in this respect to the notion of a *reinforcement cycle*, defined as a process of renewal where the new forms must arise via reinforcement of the old form *through the addition of an intensifier element*, as in Jespersen's (1917) negative cycle.

In recent literature, there are basically two main approaches to the issue of demonstrative reinforcement. According to some scholars, some demonstratives undergo feature loss (e.g. due to phonetic erosion), which can be restored through cyclical reinforcement (e.g. Lightfoot 1991: 171; van Gelderen 2011: 197–244). This view would imply that the bleaching and renewal happens prior to the reinforcement. Other scholars have suggested instead a non-teleological account of demonstrative reinforcement (most recently, Goldstein 2023; see also Hopper and Traugott 2003; Haspelmath 2018). According to this view, reinforcement is not triggered by feature restoration, and reinforced demonstratives do not necessarily express only spatial deixis, since reinforcement does not serve only to restore a deictic feature (Goldstein 2023: 92–97). Accordingly, this approach pursues the idea that reinforced forms can also express pragmatic meanings, such as an attention-directing function or, as we will see in Section 3.4, the speaker's subjective stance. In this chapter, we adhere to the latter model of language change, highlighting how pragmatic factors contribute to the reinforcement and to the renewal of Latin and Italian demonstratives.

A crosslinguistically widespread source for reinforcement is constituted by *deictic forms*, which can be added to demonstratives with an intensifying function: examples are the Latin presentative particle *eccu(m)* 'here it is!' and the Italian locative adverb *qui* 'here'. This is probably because demonstratives typically convey deixis, distinguishing proximity and distance of referents with regard to time, location, and speech participants, and guiding the hearer's attention to referents (see, e.g. Lyons 1999: 18–21; Diessel 2006). Intensifying deictics have fully grammaticalized in some languages: for example, van Gelderen (2011: 223) discusses the diachronic development leading to the grammaticalization of French intensifiers *ci* and *là* into demonstratives proper (*ce livre-ci*, lit. 'this book-here', *celui-ci*, *celui-là*, lit. 'this-here', 'that-there'), tracing the beginning of deictic strengthening back to the 16th–17th century. In many other languages, intensifying deictics instead constitute a pragmatic option. In such constructions, deictic elements can express concepts and relations beyond the spatio-temporal scenario and index the

subjective position of the speaker in the discourse situation. Lakoff (1974) speaks of *emotive demonstratives* in this respect, Lyons (1977: 677) of *emphatic deixis*, and Rybarczyk (2015: 29) of *demonstratives with an attitude*. All these scholars are concerned with deictics functioning as *qualifiers* that give a pragmatic, evaluative interpretation within the discursive subjective sphere. This is precisely what we find in contemporary Italian, where the reinforcement of demonstratives by means of locative adverbs often expresses a subjective, typically negative connotation—as in (1), where speaker A, a student, is in fact insulting one of his professors.

(1) KIParla corpus (BOA3021)

A: *eh dici ma **questo qui** è un coglione*

B: [*eh ma magari (.) è uno di quei prof che ha bisogno di ripetere lo stesso concetto venti[mila volte]*]

'A: eh you say but **this here** is an asshole

B: [eh but maybe (.) he is one of those professors who needs to repeat the same concept twenty [thousand times]'

In Italian, these forms have so far not yet received a great deal of scholarly attention. Most reference and historical grammars do not discuss them (see, e.g. Rohlfs 1968; Renzi, Salvi, and Cardinaletti 1988/1995; Maiden 1995). In her monograph on demonstratives in spoken Italian, Gaudino-Fallegger (1992: 237–248) does include reinforced demonstratives in her analysis; however, their frequency in the two spoken corpora considered is remarkably low (47 tokens) and does not allow us to give a fully satisfying description of their uses and pragmatic functions. Sabatini (1985: 159) limits himself to listing reinforced demonstratives among the 35 diagnostic features of what he calls *italiano dell'uso medio*, lit. 'Italian of average usage', renamed 'neo-standard Italian' by Berruto (1987). Neo-standard Italian corresponds to a structurally simpler variety of language in which constructions that are mostly typical of spoken varieties—and as such not included in reference grammars—have lost much of their socio-linguistic markedness. Neo-standard Italian thus constitutes a new variety of contemporary Italian characterized by phenomena of restructuring and re-standardization, which are particularly evident in the area of pronouns (Berruto 1987: 78–79). Reinforced demonstratives are also present in the deictic systems of a number of dialects of Italy: Ledgeway (2015) is a very thorough study that provides a precise description of different diatopic varieties. Such forms have recently been mentioned in passing also by Da Milano (2015: 61) in relation to their 'derogatory meaning', and by Zanchi (2018: 99, 119), who is interested in pragmatically loaded usages of the 'simple' demonstratives *questo* 'this' and *quello* 'that'.

Although valuable observations have been made in these previous studies about the socio-linguistic profile and geographical distribution of reinforced

demonstratives, they do not amount to a pragmatically informed account. The corpus-based study provided in [Section 3.4](#) aims to contribute to filling this gap. Before turning to contemporary Italian, however, we describe the main developmental phases of the demonstrative cycle from the Latin situation up to Modern Italian ([Section 3.3](#)), after first introducing the corpora and procedures we have used in our analysis ([Section 3.2](#)). The chapter ends with a discussion of the nature of the cyclical renewal discussed and assesses the status of reinforced demonstratives in relation to the framework of cycles ([Section 3.5](#)).

3.2 Data and methods

The study of Italian reinforced demonstratives provided in [Section 3.4](#) focuses on recent evolutions in the short diachrony of the last 40 years. It is carried out on a written corpus of journalistic Italian, *LaRepubblica* corpus, which collates newspaper articles published between 1984 and 2018. Our analytic procedure is both quantitative and qualitative. First, we provide a quantitative analysis of all the documented constructions involving the demonstratives *questo* ‘this’ and *quello* ‘that’, inflected for different genders and numbers, in combination with *qui* and *qua* ‘here’ and *lì* and *là* ‘there’. Then, after considering the frequency of use of reinforced demonstratives in the four decades selected, we describe their pragmatic meaning also in relation to deictic features.

We have relied on a corpus of written language for three main reasons. Firstly, for the sake of general coherence of the linguistic data investigated: since our study examines texts produced over a long period of around 2,000 years, the texts representing the diachronic phases prior to the 20th century are necessarily written. Secondly, because this corpus makes it possible to cover a diachronic span of several decades, allowing us to appreciate the development of reinforced demonstratives in the short diachrony of a crucial moment in their development. And lastly, because journalistic writing often incorporates stretches of speech and its characteristic features in the transcription of interviews and telephone wiretaps, thus indirectly mirroring incipient changes emerging in the spoken language.

Finally, to explore some aspects related to the emergence of reinforced demonstratives in the history of Italian, we also used the *Biblioteca Italiana* corpus, which collects around 1,600 Italian literary texts produced over a period of time ranging from the Middle Ages to the early 20th century.

3.3 The onomasiological cycle of Latin and Italian demonstratives

As anticipated in [Section 3.1](#), the two characteristic—and deeply intertwined—features of the renewal of demonstratives from Latin to Italian are:

- (i) a cyclical alternation in the number of distinctions involved in the demonstrative system, and
- (ii) a cyclical re-deictization of demonstratives, which undergo recurrent reinforcement through deictic intensifiers.

In this section we discuss the nature and dynamics of both developments. We look first at the Latin situation (Section 3.3.1) and then follow the development of demonstratives up to Old and Modern Italian (Section 3.3.2), before focusing on the scenario of contemporary Italian, whose main innovation—the emergence of reinforced demonstratives—will be the subject of an in-depth analysis in Section 3.4.

3.3.1 The first segment of the cycle: Latin

Early to Postclassical Latin (3rd century BCE to ca. 3rd century CE) had a three-term system made up of three demonstrative pronoun-determiners: *hic*, a proximal or first-person-oriented demonstrative, indexing reference to the speaker in an immediate situation ('this'), featuring an enclitic demonstrative suffix *-c*;³ *iste*, a medial or second-person-oriented demonstrative, pointing to an entity in a space nearer to the hearer ('that of yours'), featuring a demonstrative suffix *-te*;⁴ and *ille*, referring to the space beyond the proximity to the speaker and hearer ('that'), featuring a deictic element—*l̥*⁵—which conveyed the notion of distance (see Lüdtke 2015: 541).⁶

The system also included a deictically neutral demonstrative pronoun-determiner *is*, reserved for anaphoric use. This form was used frequently by Lucretius, Catullus, and in 'lower' poetry (e.g. in Horace's *epistulae* and *satirae* and in Ovid's *Tristia*) but was never fully established in higher registers (e.g. it is found only once in Horace's lyrics: *carm.* 4, 8, 18). With the beginning of the Imperial period, the form began to suffer competition from other demonstratives: Seneca, Pliny the Elder, and Quintilian, for example, overwhelmingly use *hic* instead of *is* (Leumann, Hofmann, and Szantyr 1972: 181). In Late Latin, *is* survived only in a few circumstances: as a pronoun, in disyllabic forms such as the genitive singular *eius*, and when situated close to the verb or the relative pronoun (which reinforced its tendency to become a clitic). Adjectival *is* survived only in crystallized phrases (e.g. *eō locō* 'in this place', *id est* 'this is':

³ This is the shortened form of the suffix *-ce*, which is also found in other pronouns (e.g. *huiusce*, *huncce*, *horunce*, *hosce*) and also in combination with the interrogative *-ne*, in *hocine*, *istucine*, and *illicine* (see Allen and Greenough 1903: 67) and in the presentative particle *ecce* (on which see below).

⁴ This suffix originates from a demonstrative pronoun **to-* (also present in, e.g. *talīs*, *tam*, and *tantus*), of which it constitutes the accusative masculine singular form **tom* (Walde and Hofmann 1982 [1822] II: 715).

⁵ This deictic element is present also in *ultra* 'beyond' and *olim* 'at that time' (see Bauer 2007: 113).

⁶ We excluded *idem* and *ipse* from our investigation in order to limit our research to the joint study of the three demonstratives characterized by a person-oriented deixis, namely Latin *hic*, *iste*, and *ille* and their Italian continuators.

see [Fruyt 2010: 21](#)). In the *Itinerarium Egeriae*, *is* does not have a very marked demonstrative character according to [Trager \(1932: 13–14\)](#), and it is mainly used pronominally, its utility being quite restricted ([Hertzenberg 2015: 7](#)). All in all, the gradual abandonment of *is* was probably determined by a decisive factor, namely the ambiguity derived by the partial coincidence with some forms of *hic*: since the *h* was silent, several forms of *hic* were homophonous with forms of *is* ([Bauer 2007: 117](#); [Fruyt 2010: 28](#)). This first developmental phase is illustrated in [Table 3.2](#).

Table 3.2 The renewal of Latin demonstratives: the expansion of *hic*

	Anaphoric		Proximal	Medial	Distal
Early and Classical Latin	IS		HIC	ISTE	ILLE
Postclassical to Late Latin	IS/HIC	←	HIC	ISTE	ILLE

The other main change in the reorganization of the demonstrative system between Classical and Late Latin concerned *iste* in relation to *hic*, whose boundaries were not always clear-cut. A reason for this is that both demonstratives were employed at this stage to retrieve a nominal referent without establishing an apparent connection with either the speaker or the hearer ([Carlier and Guillot 2018: 214](#)). This prompted the loss of the original discourse configuration where the personal spheres of the speaker (*hic*) and the hearer (*iste*) were separate, and the substitution with a new discourse configuration where the two spheres were combined in a common sphere of interlocution, with speaker and hearer no longer kept distinct. According to [Carlier and Guillot \(2018: 214\)](#), bridging contexts triggering the merge of *hic* and *iste* were those where the distinction between the personal spheres of the speaker and the hearer was irrelevant. Therefore, from Classical Latin onwards *hic* continued to maintain its monopoly on deictic reference in the immediate context of the utterance (*in hoc seculo* ‘in this century’, *hac nocte* ‘this night’), but *iste* was occasionally chosen in competition with *hic*, without any apparent semantic distinction, to link a nominal referent or proposition to the shared sphere of interlocution.

Motivations of a different nature appear to be at the root of the gradual decline of *hic*. Firstly, there were morphological reasons, as pointed out by [Carlier and Guillot \(2018: 206\)](#), who note that *hic* (like *is*) does not separate the lexical morpheme from the inflection as it is characterized by a fusion between the lexical and the inflectional morphemes. Conversely, *iste* (like *ille*) presents an invariable lexical morpheme to which an inflectional suffix is added, thus entailing a more straightforward and unequivocal pairing of form and meaning. Moreover, *iste* was also used already in Early Latin to denote well-known referents, thus having to do with the expression of shared information and the management of common ground. An example is (2), where *isti* points to people whom

both the speaker and his interlocutor know well. In such cases, the deictic relation with the referent is not very prominent and *iste* works as a passe-partout demonstrative.

(2) *verum ita sunt <morati>isti nostri divites:*

si quid bene facias, levior pluma est gratia,

si quid peccatum est, plumbeas iras gerunt. (Plaut. *Poen.* 811–813)

‘But that’s the way **these our rich men** are: if you do them a good turn, the thanks is lighter than a feather; if you make a mistake, their anger is as heavy as lead.’

This usage probably triggered and fostered the neutralization of the clear association with the second person, determining an increase in frequency of this item and a consequent decrease in specificity, and helped this form gain functional space in the domain of *hic*. We have clear signs already in Catullus, where *iste*, modified by a possessive adjective like *meus* ‘my’, is used as a proximal or first-person-oriented demonstrative instead of *hic* ((3)); then in Horace, Ovid, Lucan, and in prose from Vitruvius to Seneca, Pliny, and Quintilian.

(3) *iste meus stupor nil videt, nihil audit* (Catull. 17, 21)

‘**this my** booby sees nothing, hears nothing’

In Late Latin, *iste* ‘is lexically a word for “this”, a strong, unmistakable “this”’ (Trager 1932: 16). Nocentini (1990: 146) argues that *iste* is a proximal deictic in the *Itinerarium Egeriae*, and as such it is used in direct speech (see further Adams 1967: 26; Väänänen 1987: 48; Fruyt 2003: 117). Examples (4) and (5), taken from Hertenberg (2015: 276–277), make this point clear: in (4), *iste* is manifestly a proximal demonstrative pointing to a concrete, perceivable entity, thus functioning as what Fruyt (2003: 117) calls ‘a déictique concret, du visible et du visuel’; in (5) the bishop and Egeria are both in Batanis, and interpreting *civitatem istam* as ‘the city near you’ does not make sense since both interlocutors are in the same place—*iste* has now developed into a proximal demonstrative, meaning ‘this’.

(4) *Nam ecce ista via quam videtis* (Itin. XIV, 3)

‘For **this** road that you see’

(5) *pervenit ad civitatem, id est Batanis [...] Et tunc retuli michi de ipsa aqua sic sanctus episcopus dicens: [...] transacto ergo aliquanto tempore superveniunt Persae et girant civitatem istam* (Itin. XIX, 18)

‘Then, I came to a city whose name is Batanis. Then the holy bishop told me about the water, saying: when some time had passed, the Persians came against **this** city and surrounded it’

Motivations of various kinds contributed to the development of this outcome. Crucially to our concerns, they include two main pragmatic factors. The first is the bleaching of *iste*'s specialized deictic reference, which has its roots in Early Latin, when *iste* could be used to refer to well-known referents *irrespective of their relation to the personal sphere of the hearer*. This shows that the original semantic-pragmatic deictic component of *iste* is intrinsically fragile. The second is the expansion of *iste* at the cost of *hic*, correlating directly with a weakening of the pragmatic force of the latter, which progressively became an anaphoric expression without emphasis (thus taking over the previous role of *is*, which was used to express neutral anaphora). The resulting scenario is schematically represented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 The renewal of Latin demonstratives: the expansion of *iste*

	Anaphoric		Proximal		Medial	Distal
Early and Classical Latin	IS		HIC		ISTE	ILLE
Postclassical and Late Latin	IS/HIC	←	HIC/ISTE	←	ISTE	ILLE

In conclusion, the renewal of Latin demonstratives can be summarized as shown in Table 3.4, where Stage 2 constitutes the crucial phase of the cycle we have been discussing so far, representing a scenario of competition between forms: *hic* expanded into the functional space of *is*, and *iste*, in turn, underwent semantic-pragmatic expansion, causing it to encroach on the domain of *hic* (Stage 3). In the domain of person-oriented demonstratives, there was a change from a tripartite system to a bipartite one, with the merging, at Stage 4, of the speaker's and the hearer's spheres in the common sphere of interlocation (*iste*) as opposed to the sphere beyond the proximity of the interlocutors (*ille*).

Table 3.4 Stages in the renewal of Latin demonstratives

	Anaphoric		Proximal		Medial	Distal
STAGE 1	IS		HIC		ISTE	ILLE
STAGE 2	IS/HIC	←	HIC/ISTE	←	ISTE	ILLE
STAGE 3	HIC				ISTE	ILLE
STAGE 4			ISTE			ILLE

3.3.2 The second segment of the cycle: from Old to Modern Italian

In Old Italian varieties, the two major factors characterizing the renewal of demonstratives that we have discussed so far, namely the alternation in the number of distinctions involved and the process of formal strengthening through

re-deictization, are both relevant and subject to new developments. Succinctly put, in the transition from Latin to Italian a set of new pronoun-determiners emerged, once again altering the configuration of the system; and their formation featured a process of reinforcement by means of the same deictic element. Such a pivotal deictic form is the Latin presentative particle *ecce* ‘here it is!’, which also has complex forms such as *eccum*, *eccillum*, and *eccistum* with the accusative of the demonstratives it governs, as we shall see below.⁷

Presentative particles and constructions (such as English *there’s* or *here they are*) basically serve to bring an entity to the attention of the interlocutor(s) and have a clear deictic meaning. The addition of *ecce/eccum*, ‘expressing immediacy and engagement’ (Dionisotti 2007: 83), to a demonstrative thus established an opposition between a basic deictic meaning and its pragmatically emphatic counterpart. Reinforced forms featuring the univerbation of the particle *ecce* and the demonstratives *ille* or *iste*, such as *eccillum*, *eccillam*, and *eccillud*, are documented from Plautus to Apuleius and in epigraphic texts (cf. *ThLL* V, 2, 25,13ss.; see Perdicoyianni-Paléologou 2006; Sornicola 2011: 274–277; Adams 2013: 469–480, among others). In such forms, *ecce* originally pointed to something that was present and it had a ‘reinforcing demonstrative effect’ (Bauer 2007: 114), as shown by examples (6) and (7):

- (6) *sed generum nostrum ire **eccillum** video cum adfini suo* (Plaut. *Trin.* 622)

‘But look, I can see our son-in-law walking with his relation’

- (7) *certe **eccistam** video* (Plaut. *Curc.* 615)

‘I certainly see her right before my face’

Reinforced forms are well represented from Early Latin to Classical and Postclassical Latin; they later re-surfaced in Christian and Late Latin writers (e.g. (8), and also (4) above):

- (8) ***Ecce ista** fundamenta* (Itin. XIV, 7)

‘These foundations which you see here’

Later, syntagmatic forms coalesced into grammaticalized, univerbated expressions, gradually losing their semantic-pragmatic markedness (Lüdtke 2015: 543). A large number of Romance demonstratives can be explained in terms of this process of reinforcement. Northern Gallo-Romance varieties, for example, show forms which originated in *ecce* and a demonstrative pronoun (e.g. Old French

⁷ Semantically similar *eccum* is well attested in Plautus and Terence, but rarer in later periods (Sornicola 2011: 276), and manifests traces of declension in *eccum*, *eccos*, *eccam*, etc. (Lüdtke 2015: 543).

cist masc. sing. ‘ce’, *ceste* fem. sing., Old and Middle French *cil* masc. sing. ‘ce...là, celui...là’: [Marchello-Nizia 2006](#): 108; [Sornicola 2011](#): 234). The Italo-Romance and Ibero-Romance areas, by contrast, are characterized by forms derived from *eccu/accu*. The presentative particle played a crucial role in the formation of all Old Italian demonstratives, which re-established a trichotomy featuring three demonstrative pronoun-determiners, namely:

- (i) a proximal demonstrative *questo* (< ECCU(M)-ISTU(M)) ‘this’, referring to the personal sphere of the speaker;
 - (ii) a distal demonstrative *quello* (< ECCU(M)-ILLU(M)) ‘that’, pointing to the space beyond any proximity to speaker and hearer;
 - (iii) and a new medial or second-person-oriented demonstrative *cotesto/codesto* (< ECCU(M)-TIBI-ISTU(M)) ‘that of yours’, which denoted either a person, thing, or event in a space nearer the hearer, such as the knight pointed to in example (9), standing close to the interlocutor of the woman.
- (9) *Allora il marito dimandava la donna chi ella fosse. A cui ella rispondea: ‘Io sono stata menata da **codesto** cavaliere’* (Boccaccio, *Filocolo* 4, 67, 13th century)
- ‘Then her husband asked the woman who she was. To which she replied: “I’ve been brought by **this knight (there)**”’

The emergence of a new second-person-oriented demonstrative represents a major change in the restructuring of the Old Italian demonstrative system. The semantic value originally linked to the slot denoting proximity to the hearer disappeared in Late Latin and was reallocated to the new pronoun-demonstrative *cotesto/codesto*, which re-established a tripartite system. The cyclical restoration of a trichotomic deictic distinction is summarized in [Table 3.5](#), a slightly modified version of [Table 3.1](#).

Table 3.5 Cyclical alternation in deictic distinctions: from Latin to Old Italian

	Proximal	Medial	Distal
Early to Postclassical Latin	HIC	ISTE	ILLE
Late Latin		ISTE	ILLE
Old Italian	QUESTO	CODESTO	QUELLO

However, this system was not destined to last. In Modern Italian (16th–18th century), clear signs of a further reduction to a simplified dichotomy gradually emerged. Interesting pieces of evidence show that this new phase of transition had

its roots in the 16th century. As [Sosnowski \(2010: 62–64\)](#) reports, in contemporary grammars the use of *cotesto/codesto* is often described as old-fashioned and generally in decline. The grammarian Tani writes about the infrequency of *cotesto* in contemporary use (*COTESTO e CATUNO che gli antichi usarono, usano hoggi di rado* ‘COTESTO e CATUNO, used by ancient people, are used rarely today’; Tani, *Avvertimenti*, 1550), and Alberti claims that the only demonstrative elements in use are *questo* and *quello*; *codesto* is not even mentioned in his grammar (*questo e quello serve a ogni dimostrazione* ‘*questo* and *quello* serve for every designation’).

[Sosnowski \(2010: 114\)](#) further notes that a frequent violation of the Tuscan norm in theatrical texts of 16th-century Italy is precisely the use of *questo* instead of *codesto*, which tends to be substituted by *questo* and the analytic specification *tuo* ‘your’ (*codesto* = *questo tuo*: examples (10)–(11)), which paved the way for the elimination of the medial, second-person-oriented demonstrative.

- (10) *Tutto'l dì mi prieghi, stimoli e tormenti ch'io trovi modi di far che tu abbi **questa tua** femina* (Ariosto, *Cassaria*, act II, sc. 1)

‘All the day you beg me, urge me and torment me to find ways to make you have **this your** woman’

- (11) *Hor dov'è dunque **questo tuo** desiderio di piacerle?* (Tasso, *Aminta*, I, 3)

‘Now where is then **this your** desire of being pleasant to her?’

Non-canonical uses of *questo* to denote a person in a space nearer to the hearer are documented as well. In (12), *questo* is first used to refer to the personal sphere of the speaker, and then to that of the hearer:

- (12) *Che rumore è **questo**? Che fai tu con **questo** uomo?* (Contile, *La Pescara*, sc. 5)

‘Which noise is **this**? What are you doing with **this** [= that of yours] man?’

The quantitative analysis provided by [Sosnowski \(2010: 245–249\)](#) helps us gain further understanding of this process of functional convergence. In his corpus comprising a selection of theatrical plays written in the 16th century, he found that *codesto/cotesto* was not used in 30 texts out of 74. These 30 texts were all written by authors from regions other than Tuscany, who tended to abandon this form. At the beginning of the 17th century, the grammarian Buonmattei wrote that ‘*cotesto* struggles to be accepted outside of Tuscany, and is often misunderstood’ ([Migliorini 1960: 425](#)). This trend clearly anticipates the contemporary situation, where vestiges of the ternary system survive in Tuscan, Sardinian,

and a variety of dialects of central and southern Italy, but a binary system is most widely used elsewhere (Maiden 1995: 115; Vanelli 1997: 112; Ledgeway 2015).

Register variation played a role as well in the gradual dismissal of the medial demonstrative, since lower degrees of literacy seem to be related to the rare use of *codesto/cotesto*. To cite an example, the *volgarizzamenti* of Plautus's comedies show that *iste* is always translated with *questo* instead of *codesto*, this being a very telling piece of evidence for the abandonment of the latter form—even in cases where the original texts featured a tripartite demonstrative system.

In conclusion, the situation emerging from Modern Italian data points to a multi-layered transitory system which is both *dialect-oriented* and *style-oriented*, and where the unconscious adoption of the dialectal demonstrative system by a large number of non-Tuscan authors reveals the inherent fragility of the tripartite deictic series, the primary deictic centre (*ego*) was stronger and tended to attract the secondary one (*tu*). The reduction to a new binary system has been fully accomplished in contemporary Italian, where there is a two-term opposition between *questo* 'this' denoting proximity to speaker and hearer and *quello* 'that' expressing distance beyond the sphere of interlocution. *Codesto* 'that of yours' is limited to Tuscan varieties and a number of central-southern dialects, as explained above. To give an idea of the quantitative occurrence of *codesto* in contemporary spoken Italian, in the *Lessico di frequenza dell'Italiano Parlato* (LIP) corpus (1990–1993) we found only five hits (of which four are found in colloquial texts collected in Florence and one in a bureaucratic text gathered in Milan); in the *Lessico di frequenza dell'Italiano Radiofonico* (LIR) corpus (1995–2003) our search yielded 11 occurrences, all from an advert reproducing spoken Tuscan. The KIParla corpus of spoken Italian (2016–2019) collected in Bologna and Turin yielded even more interesting evidence. The form *codesto* appears only in one conversation and is used in a metalinguistic sense: friends from Emilia Romagna and Tuscany are discussing the geographical distribution of the form, and the former recognize in it a typical lexeme qualifying the Tuscan variety (example (13)). The Tuscan friend (speaker D) confirms that he uses it 'always', 'all the time', and gives an example that arouses general hilarity ('it sounds like a joke')—a fact that testifies to the extraneousness of the medial demonstrative in the Italian spoken outside of Tuscany.

(13) KIParla corpus (BOA3003)

A: *cos'è >che(=no<), aspetta. cos'è che dicono sempre? codesto.*

B: *code[sto].*

C: *[chi lo dice] code[sto?]*

A: *[eh. si dice] che i toscani, usino sempre (.) co[desto].*

D: *[noi.]/[>io lo uso sempre codesto.<]*

C: *lo usi?*

D: *noi si usa di continuo.*

C: *codesto, tipo?*

B: *cos'è, che ci hai messo dentro, [(a questo piatto.)]*

C: [*codesto:, piatto,*]

D: [*che hai messo in codes*]ta insalata.

B: *eh?*

A: *vedi allora, che mi ricordavo bene, [che i toscani dicono codesto?]*

D: [*che c'hai messo in codesta insalata.*]

C: [*code-*] >*sembra una*< *presa per il [cu.hlo.]*

'A: what is >that(=no<), wait. what is it that they always say? codesto.

B: code[sto.]

C: [who says] code[sto?]

A: [eh. **they say**] **the Tuscans always use** (.) co[desto.]

D: [us.] [**>I always use code**[sto.]

C: do you use it?

D: **we use it all the time.**

C: like what?

B: what is it, that you put in there, [(to this dish.)]

C: [codesto:, plate,]

D: [**that you put in codes**]ta salad.

B: huh?

A: **see then, that I remembered well, [that Tuscans say codesto?].**

D: [which you put in codesta salad.]

C: [code-] >**sounds like a joke**'

Taking into consideration the pool of data discussed so far, it is now possible to make some preliminary observations on the nature of the two cyclical changes involved in the diachronic development of the demonstrative system from Early and Classical Latin up to Modern and contemporary Italian.

Firstly, Latin and Italian demonstratives underwent cyclical re-deictization, a process of recurrent formal and functional strengthening realized through the addition of deictic intensifiers. Secondly, the linguistic change under scrutiny also featured a cyclical reorganization of the number of distinctions involved in the Latin and Italian demonstrative systems. The data discussed so far documented a switch from the Early and (post-)Classical Latin ternary system to its binary

counterpart in Late Latin. Old Italian restored a deictic trichotomy, which underwent gradual reduction to two terms starting from Modern Italian. Following [Anderson and Keenan \(1985\)](#), the two configurations at play, binary and ternary, can be interpreted in terms of a ‘person-oriented’ system based on the speaker’s deictic centre and featuring a tripartite distinction (speaker, hearer, or ‘me and you’ interlocutors vs. the ‘non-person’, to use [Benveniste’s \[1946\]](#) terms), and a ‘distance-oriented’ binary system, based on a shared sphere of interlocution. The alternation between the two opposing poles is illustrated in [Figure 3.1](#).

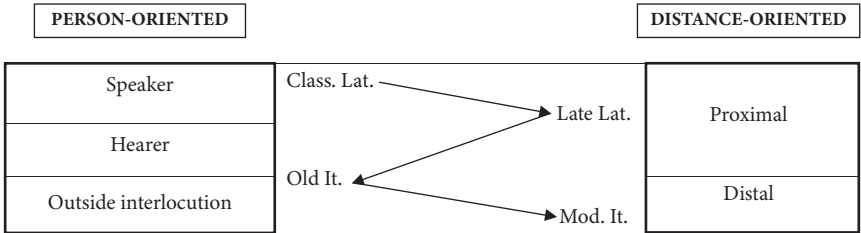


Figure 3.1 Cyclical alternation between person- and distance-oriented demonstrative systems

As mentioned at various points in this chapter, contemporary Italian features a binary, distance-oriented opposition, fully establishing the process of innovation that emerged in the 16th century. However, a new set of forms needs to be added to this configuration: that of reinforced demonstratives with a clear pragmatic meaning. This will be the focus of attention in the [next section](#).

3.4 Reinforced demonstratives in contemporary Italian

The demonstrative system in contemporary Italian is based on a binary opposition between *questo* ‘this’ denoting proximity to speaker and hearer and *quello* ‘that’ expressing distance beyond the sphere of interlocution. An interesting phenomenon, however, is currently at work in reshaping the system, namely the addition of locative adverbs *qui* and *qua* ‘here’ and *lì* and *là* ‘there’, found especially in informal varieties.⁸ As we have seen in [Section 3.1](#), the addition of a locative adverb is fully grammaticalized in French (*celui-là*), where the demonstratives themselves are not marked for the proximal/distal features and only the locatives denote which is intended. In Italian, on the other hand, the locative is redundant with respect to that distinction and constitutes a pragmatic option,

⁸ *Qui* and *qua* identify a place as connected to the deictic centre represented by the place where the speaker is located at the moment of utterance through coincidence, inclusion, or proximity. *Lì* and *là*, on the other hand, identify places that are interpreted as distant with respect to the speaker. However, between the two forms that make up each pair there is also a slight difference: *qui* and *lì* indicate precisely defined places, while *qua* and *là* point to a more undetermined area, which is not precisely delimited ([Vanelli and Renzi 2001](#): 269–274).

which can carry a subjective connotation. An example is (14), where a young speaker, aged under 25 years old, reports what a friend said, pointing to someone he does not like—a dangerous person, apparently—by using the reinforced distal demonstrative *quello lì* ‘that there’:

(14) KIParla corpus (BOD2014)

*io ero fuori con tobia, lui fa, **quello lì non mi piace**, la energia:: tipo tutte
(.) cose del genere, però ci sta. a parte che ha minacciato un cinese con un
taglierino l'altro giorno*

‘I was out with Tobia, he says, **I don’t like that there**, the energy:: like all
(.) stuff like that, but he is OK. except that he threatened a Chinese man
with a box cutter the other day’

A metalinguistic comment such as the one made in (15) provides further evidence for the pejorative nuance often implied by reinforced demonstratives—in this case, *quella lì* ‘that here’, a form cited by the speaker as a marker of subjective stance used to convey a harshly derogative evaluation. Note that the journalist clearly perceives the metapragmatic value of the form and puts it between inverted commas:

(15) *LaRepubblica* corpus_19/12/13

*‘Voglio uscire da questa storia, sono additata da tutti come “quella lì” e io non
ho fatto nulla però’*

‘I want to get out of this story, I am singled out by everyone as
“that one there”
and I didn’t do anything though.’

As we will show, this process of reinforcement through re-deictization considerably broadened the functional spectrum of demonstratives in contemporary Italian, where they can function as subjective qualifiers that do not serve to situate a referent with regard to the speech situation or the external world (exophoric function of demonstratives, according to Diessel 1999), but to give a pragmatic, evaluative interpretation within a discursive sphere. The aim of this section is to offer a pragmatically grounded, corpus-based account of this recent process of subjectification both in quantitative and in qualitative terms.⁹

As one might expect, reinforced demonstratives are attested above all in reported speech taken from interviews (66 per cent of cases), as in (16), and wire-taps (17 per cent); sometimes, they also surface in online written Italian (17). Examples (16) and (17) show the typical derogatory meanings conveyed by the reinforced demonstratives: in (16) the speaker uses the form to distance himself

⁹ Because of space constraints, in this study we have limited our investigation to pronominal demonstratives, leaving adnominal uses (e.g. *questa casa qui* ‘this house here’) to future research.

from a person whom he claims not to know, and who is negatively connoted, whereas in (17) students comment on the high school leaving exam of 2013, where a little-studied 20th-century writer, Claudio Magris, was the subject of the textual analysis part of the exam, causing general discontent.¹⁰ Such contexts show how reinforced demonstratives are used as pragmatically specialized devices expressing the speaker's stance, mostly indexing a deliberate distancing from negatively evaluated referents.

(16) *LaRepubblica* corpus_07/08/10

*'L'ex presidente degli industriali di Roma' insiste 'Fofò'. 'Nun lo sacc chi è **chistu cà** (non lo so chi è **questo qua**)', è la risposta in campano di Lombardi.*

"The former president of the industrialists of Rome" insists 'Fofò'. "Nun lo sacc chi è **chistu cà** (I do not know who is **this here**)", is Lombardi's answer in Campanian.

(17) *LaRepubblica* corpus_20/06/13

*Gli studenti, spiazzati, hanno consegnato ai commissari d'esame i loro temi scritti a penna per poi correre a fidarsi con la tastiera. 'E io che mi lamentavo di Montale'. 'Un anno a prepararsi sull'analisi del testo e poi esce **sto qua**'.*

'The students, staggered, gave the examining commissioners their hand-written essays and then rushed to confide in their keyboards. "And I complained about Montale". "A year spent preparing for the textual analysis and then we get **this here**".

Figure 3.2 shows the frequency of reinforced demonstratives in the *LaRepubblica* corpus, totalling 5,708 hits. It highlights a clear frequency peak between 1995 and 2005, a decade where there is an increase of 133 per cent in the use of these forms, affecting masculine ones especially, and above all the distal demonstrative *quello lì/là*. After 2005 there follows a phase of relative stabilization.

We compared this figure against a control corpus, a second journalistic corpus based on articles published in another Italian newspaper, *La Stampa*, focusing on the years between 1992 and 2011. It is noteworthy that the trend that emerged from the *LaRepubblica* corpus is confirmed by the data taken from *La Stampa*, which includes 1,245 reinforced demonstratives, and where a frequency peak is documented precisely during the same years (Figure 3.3). Masculine forms also prevail in this corpus—and among them, again distal demonstratives.

These data allow us to add some pieces to the fragmentary picture of the emergence and consolidation of reinforced demonstratives in Italian.

¹⁰ This example features the use of the shortened variant 'sto, an apheretic form of *questo*.

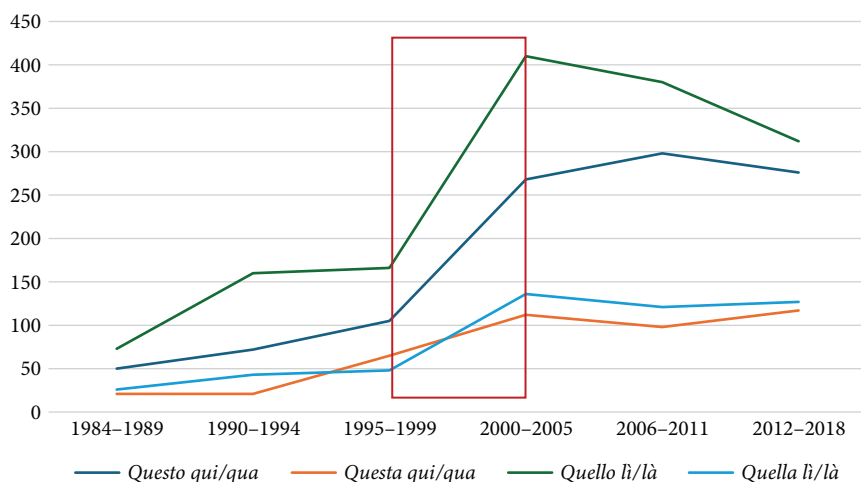


Figure 3.2 Frequency of *questo/a qui/qua* and *quello/a qui/qua* in the *LaRepubblica* corpus

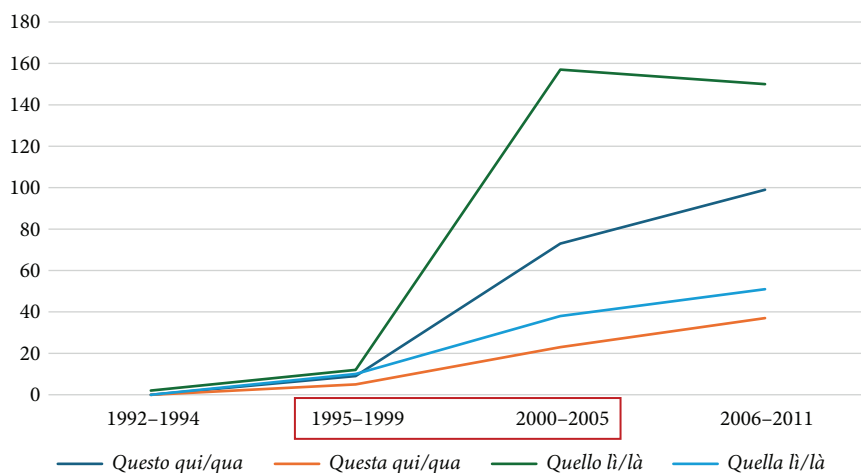


Figure 3.3 Frequency of *questo/a qui/qua* and *quello/a qui/qua* in the *La Stampa* corpus

Earlier scholarship attested to their scant presence in texts dating back to the 19th or early 20th century. Brodin (1970: 67, 112) detected only sporadic traces of these forms in 19th-century literary texts, all limited to *questo qui/qua*. According to this author, the penetration of reinforced demonstratives in Italian literature seems to coincide with the spread of verist and realist literary currents in Italy, which had significant repercussions on the linguistic choices made by the authors of the

time.¹¹ Along similar lines, in her analysis devoted to the language of the main Milan newspapers published between 1900 and 1905, [Bonomi \(2002: 72\)](#) reports that reinforced demonstratives are sometimes attested, in line with a use of the language as spoken mainly in the north. Based on these observations, it is reasonable to assume that starting from a circumscribed use, mirrored only occasionally in written texts in the second half of the 19th and early 20th century, the use of reinforced demonstratives gradually increased, to the point where it caught the attention of sociolinguists in the mid-1980s ([Sabatini 1985](#); [Berruto 1987](#): see §1). Data from the main corpus of spoken Italian collected in the 1990s, the LIP corpus, still point to a minority pattern. To give an idea, out of 3,393 occurrences of *questo*, only 138 are accompanied by *qui*, corresponding to the 4 per cent, and with the main function of strengthening exophoric reference. The question that thus arises at this point is: how did the pragmatic meaning of reinforced demonstratives emerge, through what process of subjectification? And what is the frequency of this meaning in the journalistic corpus examined?

A preliminary step to take when tackling this issue is to distinguish between spatial deixis and pragmatic deixis. Reinforced demonstratives can be used to strengthen the deictic indication of an entity located within the spatial coordinates of the enunciative *hic et nunc* and as such clearly perceivable through the senses, as in (18), or to refer to participants that are not necessarily present in the context and who undergo subjective evaluation by the speaker, as in (19). We speak of spatial deixis, connected to exophoric functions of demonstratives, in the former case, and of pragmatic deixis in the latter. In (19), for instance, the journalist reports a statement by a former prefect about Lele Mora, who in 2011 was investigated by the Public Prosecutor's Office for aiding and abetting prostitution together with Silvio Berlusconi. The former prefect explains that Mora had actresses and prostitutes whom he offered to his friends; however, he only refers to prostitutes by means of a reinforced demonstrative (*queste qua* 'these here'), which does not serve to identify a referent present in the context but to allude to them with a certain derogatory tone. It should be noted that, in transcribing the interview, the journalist decides to put the expression in inverted commas, clearly aware of—and highlighting accordingly—its pragmatically connoted value.

¹¹ These findings tie in inherently with the results of our research based on the *Biblioteca Italiana* corpus (see [Section 3.2](#)). The higher frequency of these forms (44 tokens) is found precisely in Verga's work, the greatest representative of Italian Verism. Next come Tozzi and Fogazzaro, totalling, however, only six and seven tokens, respectively. They were all born between the 1840s and 1880s. To be precise, we have also found a couple of occasional occurrences in texts from earlier periods (17th century). They show that deictic accumulation was in fact possible, although not frequent, under specific pragmatic circumstances, namely to express additional pragmatic emphasis or in contrastive contexts (as in *queste qui di Venezia, e non quelle d'Ancona, di Napoli o di Genova* 'these here of Venice, and not those of Ancona, Naples or Genoa' [Galileo, *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi*, day four], where the astronomer Salviati speaks of the waters of Venice, and is indeed in Venice: the expression *queste qui* therefore has a clear spatial deictic reference).

- (18) *LaRepubblica* corpus_04.11.08
*Vorrei farmi un altro tatuaggio. Ora c'ho solo **questo qui** sul braccio*
 'I'd like to get another tattoo. Now I only have **this here** on my arm'
- (19) *LaRepubblica* corpus_01.04.11
*'Perché - spiega l'ex prefetto ai suoi interlocutori - Mora c'ha le attrici e poi ha tutte **"queste qua"**... che dà agli amici diciamo'*
 "'Because", explains the former prefect to his interlocutors, "Mora has actresses and then has all **'these here'**... that he gives to his friends, let's say"

As we will argue further below, pragmatic meanings may have developed from certain endophoric functions of demonstratives, such as anaphoric tracking of a referent, with the addition of some subjective evaluative features. Based on general principles of semantic-pragmatic change, whereby spatial, concrete meanings are typical sources of more abstract, non-spatial meanings (see, e.g. [Tyler and Evans 2003](#)), and non-subjective meanings can develop subjective meanings (see, e.g. [Traugott and Dasher 2002](#)), it is reasonable to assume that the spatial, non-subjective deictic meaning is the one originally conveyed by reinforced demonstratives. This claim is corroborated by diachronic corpus data: in Verga, the mid-19th-century author in whose work these forms are employed with some frequency for the first time in Italian literature, the typical context of use is in direct speech with clear deictic reference to entities located in the discourse situation. In (20), for instance, the speaker refers to a concrete, visible referent: note the co-occurrence of a verb of vision, which points to a direct perception of the entity being indicated. The locative adverb clearly serves to strengthen deictic reference, also in a contrastive sense ('as for donkeys, *this here* and not others').

- (20) *O guarda l'asino di san Giuseppe! Perché non comprate **questo qui**, compare Neli?*
 (Verga, *Novelle rusticane*)
 'O look at St Joseph's donkey! Why don't you buy **this (fellow) here**, comrade Neli?'

The addition of the locative adverb serves to call joint attention to a visible referent and perhaps simultaneously to add pragmatic salience to the reference tracking process. Another example is (21), a pragmatically loaded utterance, which in our view includes a component of subjective evaluation, since the man spoken of stands with his wife in front of a half-naked girl on a stage—a scene that was deemed quite inappropriate.

- (21) *Questo qui, disse uno nella folla, s'è maritato che non è un mese, e la sposa è li che guarda, in seconda fila.* (Verga, *Per le vie, Al veglione*)

'This (fellow) here, said one in the crowd, got married not a month ago, and the bride is standing there looking on, in the second row'

Bridging contexts leading to the development of clearer subjective values are documented for example in Pirandello. In his famous play *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* 'Six Characters in Search of an Author' (1921), we find uses such as those in (22), where *quella* is firstly used by the mother with endophoric reference, pointing to a person mentioned in the previous discourse, but who is not present on stage. The stepdaughter then refers to the same person with a reinforced demonstrative, where the locative adverb serves to strengthen her reference to background knowledge and possibly to align it with the mother's subjective attitude and viewpoint.

- (22) LA MADRE. *Mi crederà, signore, se le dico che non mi passò neppur lontanamente per il capo il sospetto che **quella megera** mi dava lavoro perchè aveva adocchiato mia figlia?*

LA FIGLIASTRA. *Povera mamma! Sa, signore, che cosa faceva **quella lì**, appena le riportavo il lavoro fatto da lei?*

'THE MOTHER. Will you believe me, sir, if I tell you that the suspicion never even remotely crossed my mind that **that vixen** was giving me work because she had her eye on my daughter?

THE STEPDAUGHTER. Poor mother! Do you know, sir, what **that there** did as soon as I brought back the work she had done?'

In similar contexts, the speaker refers to a previously mentioned entity, known in the universe of discourse, which is again brought to prominence, as the speaker wishes to express additional subjective evaluation. Thus, the function of such forms is not limited to reference tracking, but enriched by further qualificatory predication (typically, disregard or dislike, as in example (22); on this point, see further Zanchi 2018: 116–117).

Figure 3.4 shows the quantitative distribution of spatial versus pragmatic deixis in a selected subcorpus, on which we carried out a more fine-grained qualitative analysis. This was compiled from online editions of *La Repubblica* published between 2000 and 2018, where reinforced demonstratives amount to 753 tokens. As is readily apparent, pragmatic meanings clearly prevail (93 per cent of total cases).

The data in Figure 3.4 document two main facts: on the one hand, the high degree of subjectification developed by reinforced demonstratives at the beginning

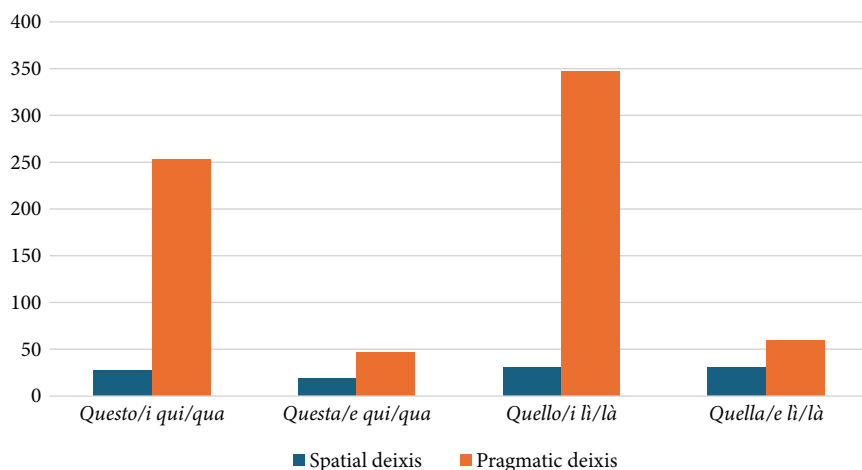


Figure 3.4 Spatial versus pragmatic deictic values in the subcorpus of *LaRepubblica* online editions

of the 21st century. On the other, the fact that there appears to be no significant correlation between proximal and distal deixis and the development of positive versus negative pragmatic meanings. In some languages, distal demonstratives have turned out to be privileged forms to express negative evaluation, because they are used iconically to point to entities that the speaker excludes from their sphere (see, e.g. [Marchello-Nizia 2006](#): 60). Such an association basically rests on the metaphorical conceptualization of intimacy and solidarity in terms of SPATIAL CLOSENESS ([Grady 1997](#): 203–206), and ultimately on the mapping AN EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP IS A DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO ENTITIES ([Kövecses 2000](#): 92). Our findings, however, show that the metaphorical projection based on the idea of emotional distance is not relevant to the subjectified meanings developed by Italian reinforced demonstratives.¹² In our view, the addition of locative adverbs primarily serves to strengthen the process of reference tracking and gives new pragmatic prominence to a previously mentioned entity. It is picked up again because the speaker wishes to add some evaluative features to it, characterizing it in terms of their subjective stance—irrespective of whether the entity referred to belongs to the speaker’s sphere or not.

¹² This result is in line with the data discussed by [Zanchi \(2018\)](#), who argued that the negatively oriented uses of the simple demonstrative *questo* require a different explanation. The metaphorical approach, moreover, likewise fails to explain the surprising similarity of attitudinal *questo* and *quello*, which is also documented by our data.

3.5 Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter, we have interpreted subsequent phases of change affecting the Latin and Italian demonstrative system as belonging to the same spiral, made up of a curve emanating from a starting point and moving farther as it revolves around two basic poles: that of ‘person-oriented’ deictic systems, based on the speaker’s deictic centre, and that of ‘distance-oriented’ deictic systems, based on a shared sphere of interlocution (Figure 3.5).

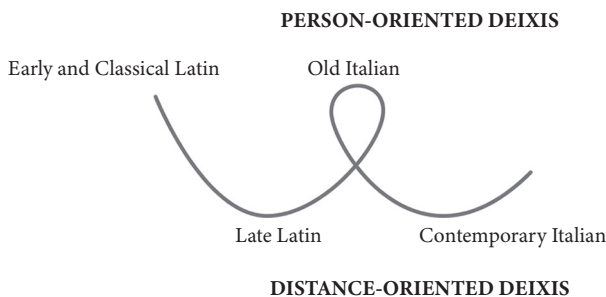


Figure 3.5 Spiral from person- to distance-oriented deixis.

Within this spiral, the first phase leads from person- to distance-oriented deixis through *semantic reduction* (*iste* encroaching on the functional domain of *hic* and levelling out the medial vs. distal deictic distinction); the second phase goes back to person-oriented deixis through *semantic elaboration* with the restoration of a third category (the medial demonstrative *codesto*) in Old Italian. The spiral then curves again towards the distance-oriented dichotomy, where the primary deictic centre (*ego*) attracts the more fragile secondary one.

From a pragmatic viewpoint, the cyclical change under scrutiny documents a recurrent renewal through deictic elements expressing a functional reinforcement. This process rests on the fact that speakers recurrently strengthen the old demonstrative with new material (re-deictization). Such additions are marked in bold in Figure 3.6. This process is particularly evident if the lexical root remains diachronically stable—see the long phase highlighted with a bold box in Figure 3.6. Importantly in the present context, however, in contemporary Italian the process of reinforcement has resulted in a set of analytic demonstratives that are fundamentally different from the other forms involved in the cyclical renewal under scrutiny, precisely because the locative expression they feature is *optional* and *not agglutinated* to the demonstrative it accompanies. This suggests a different pathway of change that does not appear to fit cyclic development in a straightforward way. This conclusion corroborates the point made by Goldstein (2023: 92), namely that it is necessary to distinguish between two distinct changes: ‘demonstrative

reinforcement on the one hand and the process by which they become the basic demonstratives of a language on the other’.



Figure 3.6 Cyclical re-deictization of Latin and Italian demonstratives.

Functional and usage-based factors play a major role in the process of deictic reinforcement between Latin and Italian: inflectional transparency enhances the online processes of coding and decoding and reduces cognitive costs; ambiguity is abandoned in favour of simpler morpho-phonological parsing, which facilitates the semantic analysis of complex forms; forms with a unique identifiable meaning are diachronically more stable. And what is more, our analysis of contemporary Italian reinforced demonstratives suggests that the process of reinforcement may be triggered by pragmatic factors, since the addition of locative adverbs primarily served to strengthen the process of reference tracking, giving pragmatic prominence to an entity to which some evaluative features can be added in terms of stance and intersubjective alignment.

Acknowledgements

This study is the result of joint work of the authors. However, Chiara Fedriani wrote [Sections 3.1, 3.2, and 3.4](#), while Piera Molinelli wrote [Sections 3.3 and 3.5](#). We thank Giulia Donati for sharing her data with us. We are grateful to Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen, Richard Waltereit, and two anonymous reviewers for their careful reading and valuable suggestions and remarks.

Conflicting mechanisms in cycles of simulative demonstrative reinforcement

Urd Vindenes

4.1 Introduction

The Norwegian simulative demonstratives *sånn* and *slik*, meaning ‘a kind of’, ‘that kind of’, or ‘such’, are used as adverbials (*jeg skriver sånn her* ‘I write like this’), adnominal modifiers (*en sånn der vannkanon* ‘one of those water cannons.INDEF’), or pronouns (*han har sånne der på taket* ‘he has those (things) on the roof’). These demonstratives denote manner, quality, and degree. Here, the term *simulative demonstrative* (following Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998) is used as an umbrella term to capture similarity in all these domains.

This study investigates the use of deictically contrastive, complex simulative demonstratives, *sånn her* ‘such here’ and *sånn der* ‘such there’, and their development through reinforcement in Norwegian. A complex demonstrative is a deictic word which is reinforced by an additional word or clitic—an intensifier. In Norwegian, the simulative demonstratives *sånn* and *slik* may be used together with the adverb-like words *her(re)* ‘here’ and *der(re)* ‘there’ in both adnominal and adverbial or pronominal position, as in the following examples (if not otherwise stated, all examples are written in the Nynorsk standard of Norwegian):

- (1) *det var mykje sånn der bråkemusikk*
it was much such there noisy music
‘There was a lot of noisy music.’ (LIA, Arna)
- (2) *pleier vi vere der eit par dagar sånn der*
use we be there a couple days such there
‘We’re usually there, like, for a couple of days.’ (LIA, Vadsø)

In spoken Norwegian, demonstrative intensifiers come in many forms, including the simple variants *her* and *der*, as well as more complex variants such as *herane*, *derane*, *henne*, *denne*, *herne*, *derne*, and more. In this chapter, these phonologically

complex forms will be referred to as *extended intensifier variants*. Although the short intensifier variants *her* and *der* are more frequent than the extended variants *herre* and *derre* (Vindenes 2018a: 132), the latter give the impression of being more salient and prototypical demonstrative intensifiers, at least for their endophoric functions. The short variants are polysemous and can function as locative demonstrative adverbs in addition to being used as intensifiers, so it is not surprising that the extended variants are more strongly associated with the intensifying function. Contexts where *der* and *her* are not interchangeable rarely allow extended *derre*-intensifiers. Thus, *sånn der N* is more polysemous than *sånn derre N*, which is specialized for introducing new referents and marking solidarity between speaker and hearer (cf. Section 4.5.2.3). This domain of usage might also explain why the extended variant is more colloquial than the short variant: *sånn derre* is often used in an emotional, affective way, while *sånn der* might be more neutral.

The aim of this study is to investigate the use and development of complex simulative demonstratives like *sånn der bok* ‘such book’ in modern Norwegian. It also explores why the cycles of simulative demonstratives differ from identity demonstratives, often stopping short of complete renewal/replacement.

In the following section, some background on simulative demonstratives and deictic reference, both in general and specifically in Norwegian, will be provided. This section also includes a schematic overview of demonstrative reinforcement and cyclicity. The materials and methods used in the study are presented in Section 4.3, with the results detailed in Section 4.4, followed by a more comprehensive discussion in Sections 4.5 and 4.6. It is argued that the reinforcement process created new specialized simulative demonstratives signalling contrasting exophoric reference and certain endophoric functions, such as introducing new referents and hedging in discourse. Contrary to the cyclic reinforcement observed in identity demonstratives, where locative expressions can eventually replace the original forms, Norwegian simulative demonstratives follow a different trajectory. This is primarily attributed to avoidance of polysemy between demonstratives that express similarity or identity.

4.2 Background

4.2.1 Simulative demonstratives and deictic reference

A demonstrative’s basic function is to refer deictically to something inside or outside the discourse. The target of the demonstration is the *demonstratum* (Clark et al. 1983) and the referent may or may not be the same as the *demonstratum*. In example (3), the *demonstratum* and referent are *identical*, while in example (4),

the *demonstratum* is *similar to* or equal to the referent, thus creating an ad hoc kind of car (cf. König and Umbach 2018: 309):

- (3) *Den bilen der er min.*
 that car.DEF there is mine.
 ‘That car there is mine.’
- (4) *En sånn der bil har jeg og.*
 a such there car.INDEF have I too.
 ‘I have a car like that.’

The referent in (3) is uniquely determined by the demonstrative *den N der* ‘that N there’, given that there is a salient car that the hearer is able to identify. In example (4), the similative demonstrative *sånn der* does not point out a referent, but rather it points out an object that can help the hearer imagine the referent (Umbach and Gust 2014 use the term *similarity demonstratives*). The term *similative* seems to have been introduced by Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998), who describe general similatives as comparisons of manner, as in *I am busy like a bee*. The term was used with reference to expressions of similarity in adnominal and pronominal uses of *such* by van der Auwera and Sahoo (2015), van der Auwera and Coussé (2016), and van der Auwera and Sahoo (2020), as in *I want such a cat*.

Clark et al. (1983: 247) point out that the speaker must provide the hearer with enough information about the *demonstratum*, the referent, and the relation between the two for the hearer to interpret the reference. The speaker and hearer share a common ground—a set of ‘mutual knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions shared by the speaker and the addressees’ (ibid.). The hearer will base their inferences on basic knowledge as well as the common ground to identify the correct referent. According to van der Auwera and Sahoo (2020), similative demonstratives like *such* create ad hoc categories based on similarity between the *demonstratum* and the referent (cf. also König and Umbach 2018). Ad hoc categories might be a useful strategy when there is no word or conventionalized phrase for what the speaker wants to refer to; for example, a specific type of cat, restaurant, or car (cf. example (4)).

Following Diessel (1999) and his typological analysis of demonstratives, the pragmatic functions of demonstratives can be divided into two main categories: exophoric and endophoric functions. The former is used with reference to entities in the speech situation or in the outside world, while the latter is discourse-internal and is further subdivided into three functions: anaphoric, discourse-deictic, and recognitional. Demonstratives used with exophoric function focus the hearer’s attention on surrounding entities, either visible and concrete ones or non-visible ones. If the *demonstratum* is abstract (e.g. *this feeling*) or not completely visible (e.g. *this town*), the reference is symbolic.

Reference to visible and concrete entities is termed *gestural exophoric reference* (cf. Levinson 1983: 66). Common to both types is that they imply the speaker is the deictic centre, and they indicate a contrast on a distance scale (Diessel 1999: 94).

In recognitional use of demonstratives (Himmelfmann 1996: 230), referents are intended to be identified through shared knowledge between speaker and hearer rather than through clues in the physical or discourse surroundings: *those kind of dusty hills* (ibid.). Himmelfmann notes that recognitional use occurs when the speaker is unsure if the hearer can identify the referent. It follows that referents marked with such demonstratives are *discourse-new*: ‘Recognitional demonstratives are specifically used to mark information that is discourse-new (i.e. unactivated) and hearer-old (i.e. pragmatically presupposed)’ (Diessel 1999: 106). In Norwegian, complex identity demonstratives (*den der* ‘that there’, e.g. *den der boka* ‘that book (you know)’) are highly associated with the recognitional use (Vindenes 2018a), and the recognitional use is associated with bleached contrastive meaning between proximal and distal forms (cf. Diessel 1999: 199).

If a referent is discourse-new *and* hearer-new (rather than discourse-new and hearer-old), the discourse-pragmatic function of the demonstrative is not recognitional (Diessel 1999: 109). Rather, such demonstratives mark new topics that usually persist in the following discourse (ibid.): *there was this guy*. According to Diessel, unstressed *this* in English is a type of indefinite article. In Sections 4.5.2.1 and 4.5.2.2, I discuss the use of *sånn* (*her/der*) as an introducer of hearer-new information.

4.2.2 Deictic contrast

Generally, similitive demonstratives in Indo-European languages are not marked for distance contrast (König and Umbach 2018). When used contrastively, demonstratives indicate the distance of the *demonstratum* in relation to the location of the speaker (often referred to as the *origo*); for example, *this book* (*near me*) versus *that book* (*over there*). According to Saeed (2009: 191), every language has an implicit division of the space around the current speaker. There may be different reasons why distance and location are important aspects of the semantics of demonstratives. Levinson (1983: 79) points out that locational specification is one of two basic ways of referring to objects (the other one is by describing them). The ability to be located is also one of the most important properties that separates instances of a type from types (cf. Langacker 1991: 57). Furthermore, specifying the location of a referent in the physical surroundings may be one of the most central ways of achieving joint attention (Diessel 2006: 465): *Look at this painting here!*

The distinction between proximal and distal distance is not clear-cut. According to Diessel (1999: 160), these labels should be regarded as approximations.

One study (Piwek et al. 2008) indicates that for Dutch and English, the distinction between proximal and distal demonstrative forms corresponds to intensive and neutral directions of attention. Coventry et al. (2014) emphasize the fact that the proximal and distal space around the *origo* is also very variable. From the speaker’s perspective, proximal space may, for instance, be extended by tool use or contracted by reduced visibility (ibid. 48; cf. also Coventry et al. 2023: 2100). Finally, it is important to emphasize that the proximal and distal demonstrative forms are often grammaticalized in different contexts and can acquire new functions that are not exophoric or do not have anything to do with location in space. This is the case also for complex similative demonstratives in Norwegian, as we shall see in Sections 4.4 and 4.5.

4.2.3 Cyclic renewal of demonstratives

The development of complex demonstratives has several properties in common with Jespersen’s (1917) well-known analysis of the renewal of clausal negation markers, known as the *Jespersen Cycle* (Dahl 1979), and is referred to here as a demonstrative reinforcement cycle. The development from adverbs meaning ‘here’ or ‘there’ to proximal and distal demonstratives or demonstrative intensifiers via a stage of reinforcement is known not only in Norwegian and other Germanic languages (cf. Section 4.2.4.2) but also across language families. Renewal of demonstratives through locative reinforcement has been documented in French, Hausa, Lingala, Ngbaka, Buang, Papiamentu, and Baka, among others (Heine and Kuteva 2002). Following Reinöhl and Himmelmann (2017), Vindenes (2018b) argues that although the result of such demonstrative cycles is renewal of the original demonstrative, renewal is not the motivation behind cyclic change. Instead, each stage in the demonstrative cycle is motivated by external factors such as the maxim of extravagance (Haspelmath 2000) or attempts to achieve joint attention (stage 1; see Figure 4.1), potentially resulting in reanalysis.

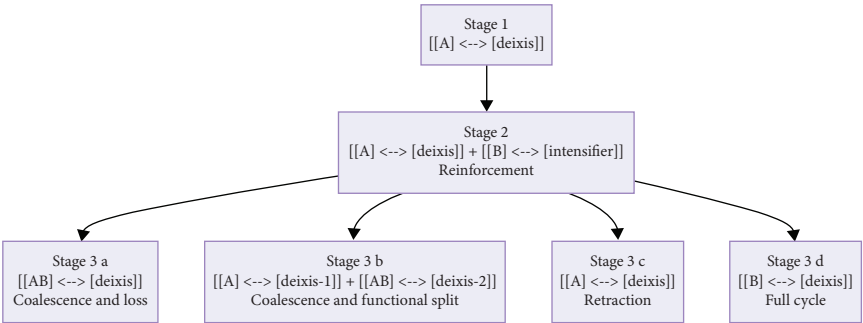


Figure 4.1 Possible stages in a demonstrative reinforcement cycle

1. The old form (the old demonstrative, represented as 'A' in [Figure 4.1](#)) is the only one that is used with a particular deictic function (e.g. exophoric function).
2. The old form is optionally reinforced by an intensifier ('B'). This may again lead to:
3. Coalescence and subsequent competition between forms, which may have different possible outcomes:
 - (a) Loss: the old simple demonstrative is lost and the coalesced demonstrative survives ('AB').
 - (b) Functional split (both forms survive): the demonstrative and the intensifier coalesce into one morphologically complex demonstrative, which specializes in a function that does not completely overlap with the function of the old demonstrative ('A' + 'AB').
 - (c) Retraction: the reinforcing element disappears again (back to 1: 'A').
 - (d) Full cycle: the old demonstrative is omitted and the reinforcing element is used as a demonstrative ('B' gets a new function).

Demonstrative cycles are driven by mechanisms motivated by pragmatic factors or speaker strategies. For a demonstrative cycle to reach stage 3(d) (full cycle, replacing the old demonstrative with an intensifier), the necessary mechanisms are (i) grammaticalization of the old form, (ii) reanalysis of another lexical element as an intensifier and subsequently as the primary marker of deictic meaning, and (iii) phonetic attrition of the old demonstrative.

Demonstrative renewal is a result of reinforcement, not a cause. This view is supported by the observation that reinforcement also happens in languages with fully functional and non-grammaticalized demonstratives, such as Swahili (cf. [Vindenes 2018b](#)). If cycles were driven by a need for renewal, they would be 'self-driven' like perpetual motion machines. However, speaker strategies and pragmatic factors act as external forces. Grammaticalization of demonstratives is common cross-linguistically ([Diessel 1999](#)) and is closely linked to reinforcement. [Vindenes \(2018b\)](#) suggests that new, complex demonstratives formed through reinforcement compete with old, simple demonstratives, catalysing the grammaticalization of old forms as new forms specialize in deictic use.

The boundaries between demonstratives and grammatical items such as personal pronouns or definite articles are gradual. [Diessel \(1999\)](#) argues that exophoric demonstratives are semantic primitives but that they in turn may give rise to new demonstratives, or to grammatical markers such as third-person pronouns, sentence connectives, and expletives (see [Diessel 1999: 155](#)). Grammaticalization always involves functional changes such as semantic bleaching and pragmatic enrichment, which lead to increased functionality (grammaticality).

Semantic bleaching of a demonstrative will occur as described in [Diessel's \(1999\)](#) first and second signs of grammaticalization:

1. The grammaticalized demonstrative is no longer used to focus the hearer's attention on entities in the outside world.
2. The grammaticalized demonstrative is no longer deictically contrastive.

The first change could also be expressed as a loss of exophoric function, which is related to the loss of deictic contrast (the second sign). These signs or criteria can be applied both to the prenominal intensifier elements *her* 'here' and *der* 'there', which developed from deictically contrastive adverbs, and to the whole complex demonstrative construction, which is first used exophorically and with contrastive function, and later with endophoric and non-referential functions. In addition to the two functional criteria cited here, [Diessel \(1999\)](#) mentions six additional criteria that can be used to identify grammaticalization of demonstratives, relating to syntax, morphology, and phonology. These include syntactic fixation, obligatorification, restriction to the distal form, loss of ability to be inflected, phonological reduction, and coalescence with other free forms. [Vindenes \(2018b\)](#) suggests that the frequently documented relationship between reinforcement and grammaticalization (or 'reduction') should not be explained as grammaticalization causing reinforcement but as reinforcement *catalysing* grammaticalization.

4.2.4 Norwegian demonstratives

4.2.4.1 Sønn

Traditionally, the Norwegian word *sønn* is considered an adjective, but here it is treated as a demonstrative because of its deictic reference. Similitive demonstratives are challenging to categorize. [Van der Auwera and Sahoo \(2020: 2\)](#) note that while English *such* and French *tel* create ad hoc categories, grammarians' interpretations diverge substantially, partly because they do not fit any category easily. This may cause confusion when items are viewed cross-linguistically.

In Norwegian, adnominal and pronominal demonstratives are formally identical, which is common cross-linguistically ([Diessel 1999: 60](#)). The present study investigates adverbial, pronominal, and adnominal (or adjectival) similitive demonstratives that are reinforced by an optional intensifier (*her(re)* 'here', *der(re)* 'there'). Examples of the different syntactic positions are given in [Table 4.1](#). Demonstrative intensifiers are grammatically optional and cannot replace the complex demonstrative.

All variants of Norwegian demonstratives can be used with locative intensifiers ([Vindenes 2018a](#)). Reinforcement with *her* 'here' adds proximal meaning and emphasis, while *der* 'there' adds distal meaning. In grammaticalized endophoric

Table 4.1 Norwegian demonstratives

	Forms	Example
Distal/neutral identity demonstratives	<i>den</i> C. <i>det</i> N. <i>de</i> PL.	Adnominal: <i>Gi meg den boka (der)</i> ‘Give me that book (there)’ Pronominal: <i>Se på den der</i> ‘Look at that’
Proximal identity demonstratives	<i>denne</i> C. <i>dette</i> N. <i>disse</i> PL.	Adnominal: <i>Jeg liker ikke denne boka (her)</i> ‘I don’t like this book (here)’ Pronominal: <i>Dette er galskap</i> ‘This is madness’
Personal demonstratives	<i>hun</i> F. <i>han</i> M.	Adnominal: <i>Han annen med brillene</i> <i>kjenner jeg</i> ‘I know that man with glasses’ Pronominal: <i>Se på han!</i> ‘Look at him!’
Similative demonstratives	<i>sånn</i> C. <i>sånt</i> N. <i>såanne</i> PL. <i>slik</i> C. <i>slikt</i> N. <i>slike</i> PL.	Adnominal: <i>Jeg vil ha såanne sko</i> ‘I want shoes like those’ Pronominal: <i>Jeg vil ha såanne</i> ‘I want some like those’ Adverbial: <i>Ikke sitt sånn</i> ‘Don’t sit like that’

functions, the distance meaning is often bleached, making the variants interchangeable: *Den der boka du nevnte* ‘That there book you mentioned’ and *Den her boka du nevnte* ‘That here book you mentioned’ are interchangeable. I will return to this discussion in [Section 4.5.3](#).

The endophoric use of similative complex demonstratives in Norwegian has not been extensively studied, although links between simple *sånn* and intensifiers have been identified. [Lie \(2008: 87\)](#) notes that the demonstrative *sånn* is often used together with *der/derre* or, less frequently, *her/herre*:

- (5) *sånn derre plastikk-golv*
 such there plastic floor.INDEF
 ‘plastic floor’

According to [Lie \(2008\)](#), the use of *derre* here is a general expansion of the demonstrative without a particular function. However, complex demonstratives are not merely reinforced demonstratives; their semantic properties are somewhat different from the simple variants. [Johannessen \(2012\)](#) argues that *derre* is associated with ‘modal’ uses of *sånn* and not with exophoric use. These ‘modal’ demonstratives, like modal auxiliaries, express the speaker’s attitude towards the referent, often indicating a negative attitude or psychological distance. [Section 4.5.2.2](#) will discuss these functions in more detail based on corpus findings.

In their exophoric deictic use, Norwegian similative demonstratives indicate ‘what kind’ something is or ‘what way’ something is done (cf. [Faarlund et al. 1997: 212](#)). [Faarlund et al.](#) argue that *sånn* and *slik*, unlike *den* ‘that’

and *denne* ‘this’, express similarity instead of identity with the referent (cf. (6)). *Sånn* may point to a specific object or event with a pointing gesture, but since its function is to express similarity, the referent is never unique. Contexts like (7) are unnatural because of inferred identity between the referent and the *demonstratum*.

- (6) *Kari har sånn der bil*
 Kari has such there car.INDEF
 ‘Kari has a car like that one.’ (Constructed example)

- (7) [?]*Sånn der bil er Kari sin.*
 such there car.INDEF is Kari her
 ‘A car like that is Kari’s.’ (Possible interpretation, constructed example)

Umbach and Gust (2014: 77) point out that the similative function is also the reason why the German demonstrative *so* (similar to the Norwegian *sånn*) cannot occur with definite forms of the noun because that would implicate that the set of things which are similar to the *demonstratum* is a singleton. German *so* and Norwegian *sånn* behave in the same way with respect to the similative function:

- (8) **Sånn der bilen har jeg lyst på.*
 such there car.DEF have I want for
 ‘I want the car like that.’ (Possible interpretation, constructed example)

- (9) **So das Auto möchte ich haben.*
 such DEF car want I have
 ‘I want the car like that.’ (Possible interpretation, constructed example)

4.2.4.2 Locative intensifiers

A central deictic function of complex demonstratives with *her/der* ‘here/there’ in Scandinavian varieties is exophoric deixis with contrasting function. Such demonstratives with adverb-like intensifiers are also found in other Germanic varieties, such as Swedish, Danish, and Afrikaans as well as dialects of English, Dutch, and German (Raidt 1993; Rupp and Tagliamonte 2022). These demonstratives seem to be especially widespread in colloquial spoken language in the Germanic area, such as in German and English dialects, perhaps because they seem redundant or because they are associated with spoken language due to their pointing function. Cross-linguistically, various forms of demonstrative reinforcement can be found (cf. Vindenes 2018b).

Whether the Scandinavian/Germanic locative intensifiers *her/der* should be classified as adverbs depends on terminology. *Der* does not modify the verb in a Norwegian sentence like *Den der bilen kjørte fort* (‘that car was driving fast’),

but the adverb *fort* ('fast') does. Although the source forms of the demonstrative intensifiers are adverbs, they have not necessarily retained their adverbial or locative function. According to Börjars (1998), the status of Swedish complex demonstratives (*den här/där*, similar to Norwegian *den her/der*) is controversial. She argues that the demonstrative *den* is not a distal demonstrative in *den här/där* and that 'the combinations have been reanalyzed as one lexical unit of the category determiner' (p. 20). In this chapter, *her/der* as part of complex demonstratives will be referred to as *intensifiers*.

4.3 Data and method

4.3.1 Corpora

This study primarily uses data from the Norwegian part of the Nordic Dialect Corpus (NDC),¹ Norwegian Speech Corpus (NoTa),² and BigBrother Corpus.³ The NDC includes 22 million words from spontaneous and informal conversations among 565 informants, recorded between 2006 and 2013 across 163 locations to capture dialect variation. It also includes older recordings from the 1950s to the 1980s from the dialect archive (*Målførearkivet*) at the University of Oslo (Johannessen et al. 2014). The NoTa corpus comprises approximately 900,000 words from interviews and conversations with 166 informants in Oslo.

The BigBrother Corpus consists of recordings from the first season of the *Big Brother* show, which appeared on Norwegian television in the first half of 2001. The participants are between 22 and 35 years of age, and most of them are from East Norway, but there are also participants from other dialect areas. The corpus consists of approximately 550,000 words that are orthographically transcribed and morphologically tagged. One of the major advantages of the BigBrother Corpus is its reliability as a colloquial language source, which is evidently useful for the study of certain demonstrative constructions.

4.3.2 Collostructional analysis

In order to investigate the functions of complex simulative demonstratives, my approach will encompass collocational and collostructional analyses. The latter was developed by Stefanowitsch and Gries (2003) and builds upon

¹ Nordic Dialect Corpus website: www.tekstlab.uio.no/scandiasyn.

² The Oslo part of the Norwegian Speech Corpus website: www.tekstlab.uio.no/nota/oslo/english.html.

³ The BigBrother Corpus website: www.tekstlab.uio.no/nota/bigbrother/english.html.

the traditional collocational methodology. Its main application lies in offering ‘a systematic method for uncovering the meaning of a grammatical construction and ascertaining the extent to which specific slots within it exhibit a preference for or limitation to a certain group of lexemes’ (Stefanowitsch and Gries 2003: 210). Contrary to the conventional collocational techniques that focus on discerning the meanings of lexemes through the examination of words that commonly appear together (cf. Sinclair 1991: 109), the collostructional approach is rooted in construction-based theories and is more sensitive to constructional hierarchies (Stefanowitsch and Gries 2003: 214).

Complex demonstratives (*sånn her/der N*) and simple demonstratives (e.g. *sånn N*) share similar functions, making it challenging to identify the specific contribution of the intensifier. The functional distinctions between the simple demonstratives *sånn* ‘such’ and their complex counterparts (*sånn der* etc.) are unclear. A statistical analysis of their tendencies to pair with various noun types could clarify their unique functions.

The objective is to evaluate how certain noun types are drawn to various demonstrative constructions; that is, their attraction strength. This measures which nouns are more likely to occur with complex or simple demonstratives. To measure this, we identify the most frequent nouns for constructions in *sånn* [NOUN] and *sånn her/der* [NOUN]. Then, a 2×2 table for each noun is created, with (1) the number of simple *sånn N* with the particular noun, (2) the number of complex *sånn her/der N* with the particular noun, (3) the number of simple *sånn N* without the particular participle, and (4) the number of complex *sånn der N* without the particular noun. Table 4.2 shows an example for the noun *ting* in *sånn N* and *sånn her/der N*.

Table 4.2 Example of a 2×2 table used for measuring attraction strength in collostructions

	<i>sånn N</i>	<i>sånn her/der N</i>	Σ
with <i>ting</i> ‘thing(s)’	707	65	772
with all nouns except <i>ting</i> ‘thing(s)’	3894	758	4652
Σ	4601	823	5424

For each 2×2 table, attraction strength (determined through a *p*-value) was calculated using Fisher’s exact test, which is more reliable than Pearson’s chi-squared test with low numbers (Levshina 2015: 245 ff.). If there is no difference between the constructions, they should be used equally often with the given noun. Fisher’s test calculates the probability that the distribution difference—for example, between

sånn ting ‘such thing(s)’ and *sånn her/der ting* ‘such thing(s)’—is random. If the *p*-value is below 0.05, the frequency difference is significant. For example, a *p*-value of 0.0001 for *sånn ting* being more common than *sånn her/der ting*, as in Table 4.2, indicates that this difference is unlikely to be random. This measure shows how differently simple and complex demonstratives attract the noun. Additionally, an analysis will determine each construction’s preference for simplex or compound nouns.

In order to weed out the corpus results that did not contain complex demonstratives, but instead a demonstrative plus an adverb or something else, I used the following definition of a complex demonstrative:

A complex demonstrative consists of an adnominal, pronominal, or adverbial demonstrative which is co-occurring with a *her-/der*-element that cannot be moved freely in the sentence separately from the demonstrative.

4.4 Corpus analysis results

4.4.1. Proximal versus distal intensifiers (*sånn her* vs. *sånn der*)

The simulative demonstratives *sånn* and *slik* attract both *her*- and *der*-intensifiers, with *sånn* attracting *der* nearly five times more often (see Table 4.3). In adnominal position, the intensifier is always pronominal (e.g. *sånn derre greie* ‘such thing’), unlike identity demonstratives (*den greia der* ‘that thing there’). The nouns in *sånn*-constructions are always indefinite.

Sånn der-constructions attract extended and distal *derre*-elements to a very high degree. That is, constructions such as *sånn derre jenteperiode* ‘such girly period.INDEF’ (NDC) are more frequent than *sånn der skimenneske* ‘such skiing person.INDEF’ (NDC), and far more frequent than *sånn her jakke* ‘such here jacket’ (NDC). For a discussion of the attraction of distal forms, see Section 4.5.3.

Table 4.3 Distribution of *her*- and *der*-intensifiers with simulative demonstratives in the Norwegian spoken corpora NDC, NoTa, and BigBrother

Complex simulative demonstrative		n = 823	
<i>sånn derre/der</i> (distal)		687 (83%)	
→	<i>sånn derre</i>	→	407 (59%)
→	<i>sånn der</i>	→	280 (41%)
<i>sånn herre/her</i> (proximal)		136 (17%)	
→	<i>sånn herre</i>	→	29 (21%)
→	<i>sånn her</i>	→	107 (79%)

4.4.2 Nouns collocating with simple and complex similative demonstratives

This section presents the results of the distinctive collexeme analysis of nouns that are attracted to different demonstrative constructions. Since several different nouns may occur in the N-slot of adnominal demonstrative constructions, I use data from three different spoken Norwegian corpora (NDC, Big-Brother, and NoTa; cf. Section 4.3.1) to obtain as many nouns as needed to make the results reliable.

Complex adnominal *sånn*-constructions (e.g. *sånn derre greier* ‘such there things.INDEF’) attract more or less the same type of nouns as simple *sånn*-constructions. For simple similative demonstratives, there is only one noun that qualifies as a distinctive collexeme (i.e. which is significantly more attracted to *sånn N* than *sånn N her/der*), and that is *ting* ‘thing(s)’. The nouns *småting* ‘small things.INDEF’ and *type* ‘type.INDEF’ are also more attracted to simple similative demonstratives than complex ones, but not to a significant degree (see Table 4.4). A possible reason why similative demonstratives do form collocations or prefabs with nouns with more specific meanings is that the function of these demonstratives is to introduce new referents and to signal both hearer-new and speaker-new information (see Section 4.5.2 for discussion). Nouns denoting referents that are easily identifiable, for example clearly defined items such as *dag* ‘day’ or *mor* ‘mother’, are therefore not expected to be frequent in this material—at least not frequent enough to be qualified as distinctive collexemes.

Table 4.4 Collexemes distinguishing complex *sånn her-/der*-constructions from simple *sånn*-constructions in the NDC, BigBrother, and NoTa corpora ($\log p < -1.3$ and > 1.3)

Collexeme	<i>sånn</i> (n = 4,627)	<i>sånn her/der</i> (n = 823)	log p-value
<i>ting</i> ‘thing(s)’	707	65	8.55
(<i>småting</i> ‘small things’)	21	0	(1.21)
(<i>type</i> ‘type’)	21	0	(1.21)
<i>greier</i> ‘things’	22	10	1.67

Interestingly, the noun *greier* ‘things’, which is near-synonymous with *ting*, shows the opposite tendency to *ting*, and is distinctive for complex *sånn her-/der*-constructions. Although *sånn her/der greier* is less token-frequent than *sånn greier*, we would expect the frequency of *sånn greier* to be even higher, considering how frequent *sånn* is (n = 4,627) compared to *sånn her/der* (n = 823). However, *ting* is more frequent than *greier* in both constructions (see Figure 4.2) due to the higher frequency of *ting* in general.

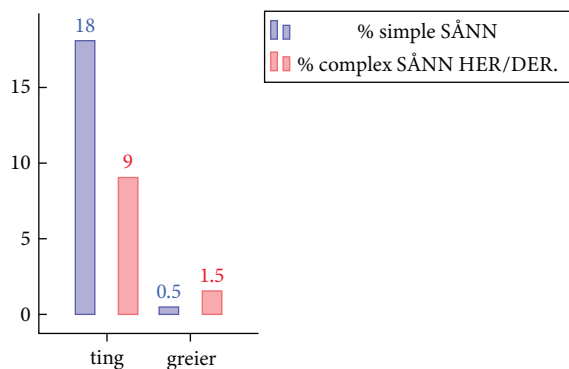


Figure 4.2 Relative frequency of simple and complex simulative demonstratives with the distinctive nouns *ting* ‘thing(s)’ and *greier* ‘things’

Complex identity demonstratives with *den* (*her/der*) ‘that (here/there)’ or *denne* (*her*) ‘this (here)’ have a larger number of collexemes that can help distinguish between the simple and complex variants compared to complex simulative demonstratives (see Vindenes 2018a: 90). A possible reason for this might be that the simulative demonstratives strongly attract *hapax legomena* (see Table 4.3), which might in itself be a distinguishing feature of these demonstratives given that they are often used to make ad hoc categories (cf. Section 4.2.4.1). Although ad hoc categories can be made with general and frequent words, such as *sånn der bil* ‘such car’, it can be argued that the large number of singletons is a sign of the demonstratives’ ad hoc function because one would assume that such categories are often denominated with less frequent words or even nonce words, such as *sånn her østlandsord* ‘such here eastern words’ or *sånn der prosjektkor* ‘kind of project choir’. Categories created ‘on the fly’ will typically be denominated by nouns created ‘on the fly’.

The counts of hapaxes and tokens in NDC indicate that complex simulative demonstratives have higher *potential productivity* than simple simulative demonstratives. If the ratio of *hapax legomena* to the total number of tokens is high, it is an indication of high potential productivity, which means that the construction has potential for expansion (Baayen 2009: 902).⁴ Potential productivity indices for simple and complex simulative demonstratives are given in Table 4.5. The complex variants have an index of 0.85 on average for the four complex variants in the table, which is slightly higher than that of simple variants (0.64). Furthermore, the complex simulative demonstratives have a higher type–token ratio than simple ones (0.89 on average vs. 0.72). This indicates that the complex demonstrative variants

⁴ The potential productivity (PP) of a pattern is measured by dividing any hapax legomena following that pattern (n_1) by the total number of tokens (N) in that category: $PP = n_1/N$ (Baayen 2009: 902).

are more often used with non-salient referents than the simple variants, and that the simple demonstrative variants might more frequently be used in prefabs.

Table 4.5 Productivity counts of adnominal simple and complex similative demonstratives in the NDC

Demonstrative	Hapaxes	Tokens	Types	Type-token ratio	Potential productivity index
<i>sånn</i> N	1690	2629	1886	0.72	0.64
<i>sånn der</i> N	127	176	132	0.75	0.72
<i>sånn derre</i> N	69	73	71	0.97	0.95
<i>sånn her</i> N	49	66	54	0.82	0.74
<i>sånn herre</i> N	14	14	14	1	1

Corpus analyses of NDC data show that nouns collocating with a complex similative demonstrative are also more likely to be compounds (e.g. *jenteperiode* ‘girly period’) than nouns collocating with simple demonstratives. In the NDC, complex *sånn*-demonstratives collocate with compounds 135 out of 327 times (41 per cent), while simple *sånn*-demonstratives collocate with compound nouns only 95 out of 940 times (10 per cent). In [Section 4.5.2.1](#), I argue that this has to do with the complex variants being unambiguous pragmatic markers of specific and private information (information that is shared by the speaker and hearer).

4.5 Semantic and pragmatic properties of complex similative demonstratives

4.5.1 Contrastive exophoric reference: the opposition between *sånn her* and *sånn der*

Distance is a central deictic feature in many demonstrative systems and is particularly relevant for the investigation of Norwegian similative demonstratives. The intensifiers *her* ‘here’ and *der* ‘there’ have shifted from location markers to parts of similative demonstratives, with their distance-marking function fading in many contexts. As adverbs, *her* and *der* clearly mark distance: *her* is proximal, referring to a location near the speaker, and *der* is distal. As parts of complex demonstratives, their deictic meanings are less clear, which is an indication of grammaticalization.

Unlike identity demonstratives (*den* ‘that’, *denne* ‘this’), simple Scandinavian similative demonstratives are not two-term deictics (see [Diessel 1999: 36](#)). They do not distinguish between proximal and distal reference. However, when *sånn* is reinforced by *her* or *der*, it emphasizes the basic deictic meaning and forms a proximal-distal distinction.

When *sånn her/der* is used with exophoric reference, it can either indicate the relative distance of a (type of) object (as in (10)) or it can indicate the relative ‘distance’ of a manner or way of doing something (cf. example (11)):

- (10) *Viss eg seier “bord” så meiner eg sånne der*
is I say board then mean I such there

‘But if I say “board”, I mean those kinds.’ (NDC, Målselv)

- (11) *Du treng ikkje svelge du kan jo gjere sånn her*
you need not swallow you can yes do such here

‘You don’t need to swallow; you can just do like this.’ (NDC, Lavangen)

In (10), *sånn der* refers to a board used as building material for the walls around the interlocutors. In many Norwegian dialects, /bu:r/ means either ‘table’ or ‘board, plank’. The interviewer asks if the informant pronounces ‘table’ as /bu:r/ (alternative to /bu:ɾ/). The informant gives a negative answer, and clarifies by indicating the wall board using *sånn der*⁵—the wall board is meant as a representation of the kind of /bu:r/ he has in mind. This function of *sånn her/der* is also possible in adnominal (e.g. *sånn der bord, ikke sånn her bord* ‘those kinds of plank, not these kinds of plank’) and pronominal positions.

In (11), *sånn her* refers to a special way of swallowing when nasally intubated in a hospital. The informant demonstrates his technique directly after the utterance. *Sånn her* refers to the speaker’s own way of doing something as opposed to others’ ways (which would be referred to with the distal form: *å svelge sånn der* ‘to swallow like that’). The proximal and distal meanings must be understood metaphorically in this case: the speaker’s own way of doing something is closer to the speaker in a metaphorical sense. Additionally, the speaker may refer to their own gestures when using the proximal form and referring to the gestures of others when using the distal form—in such cases, the distance marking is genuine and not metaphorical.

4.5.2 Discourse-deictic functions of complex *sånn her/der* demonstratives

4.5.2.1 Introduction of new referents

In many cases, the choice of proximal or distal intensifier in complex similitive demonstratives is difficult to account for, as in (12) and (13), and as the corpus analysis revealed, distal forms are far more common than proximal forms (cf. [Section 4.4.1](#)).

⁵ The informant is probably also using a pointing gesture, judging from the context, but the recording is unfortunately only audio, so this cannot be confirmed.

- (12) *Der brukte vi å ha sånn her renn før da*
 there used we to have such here race.INDEF before then
 ‘Over there we used to have this race.’ (NDC, Kirkesdalen)
- (13) *Det var jo ikkje ein sånn derre dobbeldekker*
 it was yes not a such there double-decker.INDEF
som hadde like mange plassar oppe og nede
 that had equally many places upstairs and downstairs
 ‘It wasn’t that kind of double-decker that has equally many seats upstairs and downstairs.’ (NDC, Flå)

The pragmatic functions of *sånn her* and *sånn der* in (12) and (13) are endophoric, not exophoric. With no clear deictic meaning, there is freer variation between proximal and distal intensifiers. It is difficult to determine what guides the speaker’s choice, but the distal variant is gradually spreading at the expense of the proximal one. The difference in the use of *herre* and *derre* in the Oslo corpora TAUS and NoTa indicates a change. In TAUS, recorded in the early 1970s, *derre* is used 65 per cent of the time (114 out of 175), slightly more than *herre*. In NoTa recordings from the 2000s, the use of extended intensifiers increased drastically. *Derre* accounts for the entire increase, being used 88 per cent of the time (1,363 out of 1,541). The use of *herre* declined slightly from the 1970s to the 2000s.

Why would the distal form spread over the proximal variant during grammaticalization from exophoric to endophoric use? De Mulder and Carlier (2011) note that distal adnominal demonstratives (like *that book*) often signal referents not easily identified by the immediate context, unlike those near the speaker and listener. Thus, distal demonstratives cue the listener to use prior knowledge to identify the referent (De Mulder and Carlier 2011: 530). This might explain why distal demonstratives are more prone to grammaticalization compared to their proximal counterparts—and compared to simple demonstratives, especially in the case of recognitional identity demonstratives. For complex simulative demonstratives, the distal exophoric intensifier is used when the *demonstratum* is not in the immediate surroundings. In such contexts, distal forms might be reanalysed as markers of non-activated and unfamiliar referents due to pragmatic inference.

Like complex identity or personal demonstratives, complex simulative demonstrative introduce discourse-new referents, but in addition, the referents are often hearer-new as well (Lie 2008: 85). Complex simulative demonstratives are used with hapax legomena 96 per cent of the time (cf. Section 4.4.2), indicating that their function is to introduce new and possibly unfamiliar referents into the discourse and creating ad hoc categories. Examples of such usage are given in (14) and (15). Those nouns that do recur in the N-slot of *sånn der n* denote very general entities such as *greier* ‘things’ (cf. Section 4.4.2 and example (16)).

- (14) *Men eg har lyst å fare på noe sånn der*
 but I have want to go on some such there
musical
 musical.INDEF
 'But I would like to go and see one of those musicals.' (NDC, Kirkenes)
- (15) *Eg fekk meg jo sånn her cross-sykkel til og med*
 I got me yes such here motocross cycle.INDEF even
 'I even got me one of those motocross cycles.' (NDC, Myre)
- (16) *For da du s da veit du om det*
 because then you s- then know you if it
er syrer og baser og sånn her greier
 is acids and bases and such here things.INDEF
 'Because then you ... then you know if it's acidic and basic and those kinds of things.' (NDC, Sømna)

Unstressed *sånn der* demonstratives mark specific indefinite and discourse-new referents, similar to indefinite articles. Opsahl (2009: 110–111) describes the grammaticalized use of simple *sånn* as an indefinite article in urban adolescent speech in Oslo, and this can be observed across all Norwegian dialects in the NDC material. *Sånn der* can be analysed as an extension of the article *en* 'a' or the quantifier *noen* 'some' if the reference is specific (as in (14)). In (16) there is no *en*-article, and *sånn her* is used with article-like function alone.

Although the grammatical function of unstressed *sånn der* is similar to that of the indefinite article *en*, their distribution patterns are not the same. According to the Givenness Hierarchy (Gundel et al. 1993), NPs with indefinite articles are type-identifiable: indefinite articles are chosen as referring constructions if the hearer is likely to be able to identify the type of entity that is being referred to. Lie (2008: 86) observes that the main difference between *en* (or a bare NP) and (simple) *sånn* is that the latter is used for unfamiliar or non-activated referents and can thus be placed lower in the Givenness Hierarchy. It can be added that *sånn (der)* has slightly different referential functions from *en*. There are five main reference types that are relevant for Norwegian indefinite articles (Faarlund et al. 1997: 51–52): specific, non-specific, unique, non-unique, and generic. Examples of the different uses are shown in Table 4.6.

The simulative function of *sånn der* blocks the possibility of using it with unique reference, such as with proper nouns. Referents that are referred to with proper nouns are generally uniquely identifiable, but in examples such as *Det var en Karlsen som ringte* (see Table 4.4), the indefinite article is used to signal that the

referent is unfamiliar to the speaker (Faarlund et al. 1997: 224).⁶ Since individuals cannot be similar to themselves (in a strictly logical sense, similarity presumes that the compared individuals are not identical), the use of a similative marker is unnatural in contexts where the referent is unique (cf. Section 4.2.1).

Table 4.6 Reference types of indefinite determiners in Norwegian

Reference	<i>sånn der</i>	<i>en</i>
specific and non-unique	<i>Vi så en sånn derre bisamrotte</i> 'We saw one of those muskrats'	<i>Vi så en bisamrotte</i> 'We saw a muskrat'
unique	* <i>Det var en sånn derre Karlsen som ringte</i> 'Some kind of Karlsen called'	<i>Det var en Karlsen som ringte</i> 'Some person called Karlsen called'
non-specific	<i>Kan du vise meg en sånn derre bisamrotte?</i> 'Can you show me one of those muskrats?'	<i>Kan du vise meg en bisamrotte?</i> 'Can you show me a muskrat?'
generic	?(<i>En</i>) <i>sånn der bisamrotte er et pattedyr</i> 'A kind of muskrat is a mammal'	<i>En bisamrotte er et pattedyr</i> 'A muskrat is a mammal'

The choice of a proximal or distal intensifier of a similative demonstrative does not seem clearly motivated when the function is non-exophoric. The loss of deictic meaning is an instance of desemanticization, which indicates grammaticalization. In addition, unstressed attributive *sånn der* is not always inflected in agreement with the noun, which suggests an ongoing decategorialization process as well. Although unstressed *sånn der* has grammaticalized into an article-like word, it has kept its function as a marker of similarity. This makes it different from the indefinite construction *en n*, which can have unique reference.

4.5.2.2 Private and salient referents

Using a complex demonstrative to refer to known referents can create a humoristic effect, for instance *en sånn der datter* 'such a daughter'. The reason for this is that demonstratives in general, and particularly complex demonstratives in Norwegian, have discourse-new referents (cf. Section 4.5.2.1).

As shown in Section 4.4.2, complex demonstratives collocate with compound nouns significantly more often than simple demonstratives do. Examples of such compounds include *alveprinsessegreier* 'elf princess things', *fruktcocktailopplegg* 'fruit cocktail arrangement', and *misjonærbarnblandingsdialekt* 'missionary child

⁶ The sentence *Det var en sånn derre Karlsen som ringte* can be acceptable in certain contexts, for instance if there have been multiple instances of phone scams lately, and the culprit always presents themselves as Karlsen. *En sånn derre Karlsen* would then be a reference to 'one of those who call themselves Karlsen', and the reference is no longer unique.

mixed dialect'. In Norwegian, noun–noun compounding is a highly productive word-formation process, and even though compounds may be lexicalized, newly innovated words are very likely to be compounds. In addition, there are no single nouns, apart from *greier* 'thing', that are significantly more frequent than others in complex demonstrative constructions with a prenominal intensifier—this construction attracts a variety of different nouns with approximately the same strength. The correlation between complex demonstratives and compounds (which also tend to be hapax legomena; cf. Section 4.4.2) can therefore be seen as an indication that complex demonstratives function as pragmatic markers of specific and hearer-new information (information with which the speaker anticipates the hearer to be unfamiliar; cf. Section 4.2.1).

The tendency for complex demonstratives to attract compound nouns, compared to simple demonstratives, may also be due to a stronger hedging function of the complex variants (cf. Section 4.5.3.1). When the speaker is unsure if the following noun is accurate enough for the hearer to identify the referent, the complex form may serve as a hedge. Frequent simplex nouns usually convey clear meanings and easily identifiable referents. In contrast, compounds, particularly singletons, are used for referents that are harder to identify, often requiring a hedge.

4.5.2.3 Solidarity between speaker and hearer

There are some obvious differences between *sånn der*- and *den der*-constructions, for instance that they are used with indefinite and definite nouns respectively, but they also have similarities. The strongest link between *sånn der* and *den der* might have to do with expression of sympathy or shared beliefs—they are both 'markers of solidarity', in Lakoff's (1974) terms. This might also shed light on the difference between simple and complex *sånn*-constructions.

Complex identity demonstratives with unstressed intensifiers are often used with recognitional function (cf. Vindenes 2018a). They signal that the knowledge of the referent is shared by the speaker and the hearer, but not necessarily by other speakers—thus, the referent is private and not easily accessible. In a similar way, complex simulative demonstratives often introduce referents that are non-generic and unfamiliar to both speaker and hearer. These functions indicate a kind of bond (which can be strong or less so) between the discourse participants because they either share knowledge about a non-generic referent or they are both unfamiliar with it. Since complex demonstratives with unstressed intensifiers are associated with privateness and shared knowledge, they are also suitable for expression of shared beliefs and feelings.

Lie (2008: 83) argues that using the demonstrative *sånn* as a marker of non-familiarity can be polite because it serves as a face-saving act. By using a demonstrative instead of the indefinite article, the speaker signals that they are aware that the referent is unknown, and not easily type-identifiable. The use of non-familiarity markers as a face-saving act can also be described as an expression of

solidarity with the hearer. Lakoff's (1974) term *solidarity function* primarily refers to the use of English *this*, which can be used to express positive feelings towards the referent (*This Henry Kissinger is really something*; cf. Potts and Schwarz 2010). Norwegian complex demonstratives, on the other hand, often signal solidarity with the hearer. This use is also found in English and in other languages, and is described by Lakoff as 'implied shared emotions between speaker and hearer' (p. 345). Lakoff (1974: 347) points out that 'since expressing emotion is [...] a means of achieving camaraderie, very often these forms [i.e. solidarity markers] will be colloquial as well. The Norwegian demonstratives *den der* and *sånn der* are undeniably very colloquial, and they are much more common in colloquial spoken Norwegian than in written Norwegian.

To sum up so far, referring expressions that are used to introduce new referents or convey non-familiar meaning in Norwegian can have either proximal or distal form. Still, they have one thing in common: they are demonstratives, and the typical referents of demonstratives are not easily accessible, as opposed to the referents of definite articles or personal pronouns.

4.5.3 Non-referential pragmatic functions

4.5.3.1 Approximation and hedging

Non-referential pragmatic functions of complex similative demonstratives include approximation (as in example (17)), hedging, intensifying (as in example (18)), and expression of intimacy (Lie 2008; Johannessen 2012).

- (17) *Brukte sånn 'er fire fem forskjellige fluger*
 used such (t/h)'ere four five different flies
 'We used, like, four or five different flies.' (NDC, Tana)

- (18) *Dei er skikkelig sånn der mafia*
 they are really such there mafia. INDEF
 'They are really mafia-like.' (NDC, Vardø)

The non-referential functions of simple *sånn* can be divided into hedging functions and intensifying functions (cf. Lie 2008). An example of the latter type is given in (18). Surprisingly, complex *sånn her/der* is not used with this intensifying function. In other words, complex similative demonstratives are only used with hedging and approximation functions (as well as quotative marking; cf. Section 4.5.3.2). The reason for this division between *sånn* and *sånn der* is unclear, and the only suggestion I can offer is that it may have to do with the resemblance of intensifying adnominal *sånn* to the intensifying adverb *så*, which cannot be reinforced by *der* (cf. example (20)).

- (19) *Eg minnest ein dag der var sånn*
 I remember a day there was such
vind då vi var på skulen
 wind.INDEF when we were at school
 ‘I remember one day there was so much wind when we were at school.’
 (NDC, Åseral)
- (20) *Men det var så ringt føre*
 but it was so bad condition
 ‘But the conditions were so bad.’ (NDC, Åseral)

Sånn her/der may be used as a hedge when the speaker is uncertain whether the following noun (or quote, or gesture) is accurate enough for the hearer to identify the referent. In addition, it may signal that the speaker is uncertain whether the following expression is conventional or correct (cf. example (15)). When complex *sånn*-demonstratives are used with pragmatic functions such as hedging, they are not necessarily inflected in agreement with the noun.

Many of the pragmatic functions listed here have been described in the literature on simple simulative demonstratives (Lie 2008; Johannessen 2012). Complex simulative demonstratives have a narrower meaning: as previously mentioned, they are used with hedging and approximating functions, but not as a degree marker.

4.5.3.2 Quotation marking

Complex simulative demonstratives can be used as quotative markers, as in (21) and (22):

- (21) *I forhold til andre plassar som er sånn*
 in comparison to other places that are such
‘er “la la la, kva skal du i dag da?”
 (h)ere la la la what shall you today Then
 ‘In comparison with other places, that are like “la-la-la what are you up to today?”’. (NDC, Kirkenes)
- (22) *Dei var litt sånn der ‘hm, det var ikkje*
 they were little such there hm that was not
så dumt’
 so stupid
 ‘It was kinda like “hm, that wouldn’t be so bad”’. (NDC, Lakselv)

This function is not unique to complex simulative demonstratives. Opsahl and Svennevig (2012) describe the quotative function of simple *sånn* (in comparison

with the quotative marker *bare* ‘just’). *Sånn* is typically used to introduce naturalistic and highly dramatized reports, which often include many prosodic details from the original utterance (Opsahl and Svennevig 2012). By marking the quote with *sånn*, the speaker invites the hearer to interpret the quote as a naturalistic report. According to Opsahl and Svennevig (2012: 227), the quotative marker *sånn* and the adnominal demonstrative *sånn* have at least one property in common: they focus the hearer’s attention on the following expression, and they invite the hearer to participate in the interpretation of the utterance. In addition, it can be added that the similitive meaning of *sånn* is still maintained in the quotative marker function—*sånn* (*her/der*) signals that the report is similar to what was actually said.

The identity demonstrative *den derre* is occasionally used as a quotative marker in Norwegian, but less frequently than *sånn her/der* (cf. Vindenes 2018a). One possible reason why *den derre* is less commonly used as a quotative marker is that it is used with unique reference, not with similitive function. It is more commonly used to point to an actual utterance; that is, with discourse-deictic function (as in *Hør på det her*: ‘...’ ‘Listen to this: “...”’). Nevertheless, unstressed *den derre* has several properties in common with the quotative *sånn der* and may also introduce dramatized quotes, as in (23):

- (23) *Viss vi hadde kjørt den andre og ikke klart*
 if we had driven that other and not made
det, så hadde vi fått den derre kva var
 it then had we got that there what was
det eg sa?
 it I said
 ‘If we had done that other thing, and not made it, then we would get that
 “what did I tell you?”’ (BigBrother, Lillehammer)

Note that the quote introduced by *den derre* in (23) is hypothetical—this seems to be a common feature of quotes introduced by complex identity demonstratives. Using a recognitional demonstrative as a quotative marker in such cases is probably due to their original function as markers of discourse-new and hearer-old information (in the quotative context, it would signal ‘you know what type of remark/comment I mean’).

The quotative markers *den derre* and *sånn (der)* are used in different syntactic environments, which seem to be predetermined by the more basic uses of *sånn (der)* and *den (der)*. Since the demonstrative *sånn (der)* may have adverbial function (e.g. *Jeg gjør det sånn her* ‘I do it like this’), the more grammaticalized quotative marker *sånn (her/der)* is often used adverbially with verbs like *sitte* ‘sit’, *stå* ‘stand’, and *gå* ‘go’ (see example (21)).

- (24) *Han sit der og han bruker altså å reise*
 he sits there and he uses also to rise
seg og stå og spele og berre stå sånn
 himself and stand and play and just stand such
her 'yeah!'
 here yeah
 'He sat there, and he would also stand up and play and just stand there
 like "Yeah!"' (NDC, Vardø)

Sånn (her/der) as a demonstrative is also frequently used in predicative position, as in *Han er bare sånn* 'He is just like that'. This construction may be the source of the quotative marker construction with *sånn (her/der) + være, bli* 'be, become' (cf. Opsahl and Svennevig 2012), as in (25):

- (25) *for eg trudde amerikanske damer dei var sånn her*
 for I thought American women they were such here
'ja'
 oh yes
 'Because I thought American women were like "I see ..."' (BigBrother, Skien)

Example (25) illustrates why *sånn her* and other similitive demonstratives are prone to being recruited as quotative markers: they point to different types of manners, which can be demonstrated by the speaker with the help of an illustrative quote and/or gesture. According to Hasund et al. (2012: 58), when *sånn* is combined with *herre* or *derre*, 'the pointing character of *sånn* is further accentuated'.

The distributional differences between *den derre* and *sånn derre* as quotative markers have to do with to their functions as demonstratives. As they grammaticalize, their syntactic constraints seem to persist. Since the demonstrative *sånn der(re)* is frequently used in adverbial position, it is often used with verbs when it functions as a quotative marker. *Den der(re)*, on the other hand, is only used in pronominal and attributive position, and is not used with verbs as a quotative marker either (**han står den her* 'Yeah!' 'He stands that here "Yeah!"'; cf. example (24)).

4.5.4 How were the endophoric functions acquired?

When *sånn her* (proximal) and *sånn der* (distal) are used endophorically, their original semantic differences become less distinct. This makes it unclear what influences the choice between the proximal and distal intensifier variants.

The origins of the endophoric use of *sånn her/der* are unclear, and the lack of relevant data from earlier stages of Norwegian is problematic. Since locative reinforcement, especially endophoric use, is highly associated with colloquial speech, it is hard to trace in historical written sources, even in colloquial text types like old folk songs and fairy tales. The oldest instance I have found is ‘Er du også sånn derre kunstig utklekka?’ ‘Are you also like artificially hatched?’ from the humorous short story ‘Kunstig utklekkt’ (‘Artificially Hatched’) by Oskar Braaten (1929).

There are two main hypotheses about how the endophoric functions of complex similative demonstratives have arisen. First, the endophoric use of *sånn her/der* might have evolved from simple endophoric *sånn*, which was later reinforced. If this is the case, *sånn derre* seems to have been created similarly to endophoric *den derre*, which translates to ‘that there(, you know)’, typically used to mark non-salient referents (cf. [Section 4.2.1](#)).

Alternatively, endophoric *sånn her/der* may have originated from complex exophoric *sånn der* through grammaticalization. This suggests a shift from an ad hoc category marker to a hedge. Such hedges act as face-saving acts, especially when the speaker does not expect the listener to know the name of an unestablished category. This is the most plausible hypothesis, as modern Norwegian shows layering of exophoric and endophoric complex similative demonstratives. However, this does not rule out analogy with complex identity demonstratives (*den her/der* ‘that here/there’), and the two hypotheses are not mutually exclusive.

4.6 Conflicting mechanisms in similative demonstrative cycles

In many languages, locative demonstratives reinforce identity demonstratives, leading to a change from locative to identity demonstratives. This transition is observable in certain Norwegian dialects through reinforcement. In Trøndelag Norwegian, locative intensifiers from *her/der* can replace non-similative demonstratives and be used as demonstratives on their own (cf. [Vindenes 2018a](#)). They have reached stage 3(d) in a demonstrative reinforcement cycle (cf. [Section 4.2.3](#) and [Figure 4.3](#)), completing a full cycle similar to the development of the French negator *pas* through the Jespersen Cycle. However, there is no evidence of locative demonstratives like *here/there* shifting to similative demonstratives through reinforcement and subsequent attrition.

A couple of possible explanations might account for why locatives are not reinterpreted as similative demonstratives by speakers. First, blocking or homonymy avoidance could play a part. That is, speakers might refrain from using semantically bleached locative reinforcers as similative demonstratives to avoid overlap with simple *her/der*, which are used as identity demonstratives (e.g. in Trøndelag Norwegian, *derre katta* would mean ‘that cat’). Although the role of homonymy

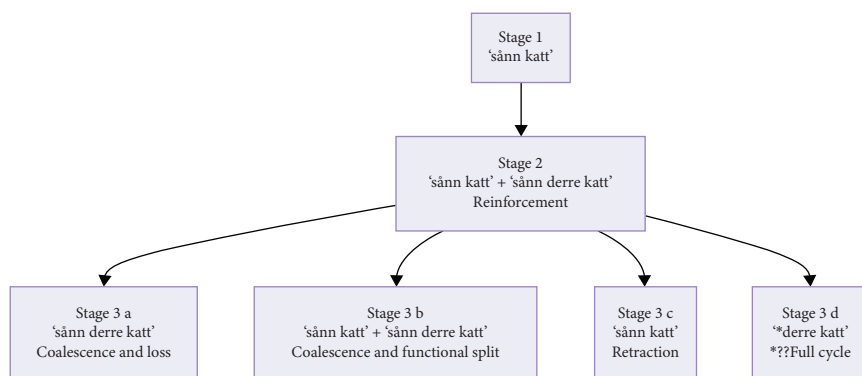


Figure 4.3 Reinforcement and subsequent developments of Norwegian simulative demonstratives

or polysemy avoidance in grammatical change is controversial, there might be a tendency for speakers to avoid similar forms within small sets of function words such as pronouns (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 103; de Vogelaer and Coussé 2011). Similarity and equality may be expressed with very similar constructions in many languages (Haspelmath and Buchholz 1998: 279), but I have yet to find evidence of languages with completely overlapping simulative and identity demonstratives.

Another factor contributing to the failure of locatives to be reinterpreted as simulative demonstratives could be a high degree of lexical persistence in the reinforcing locative expressions: *her/der* could hypothetically retain more of their original semantics—that is, their ability to be located in space—when used as reinforcers of simulative demonstratives than when used as reinforcers of identity demonstratives. This might seem contradictory seeing that complex identity demonstratives such as *den derre* ‘that there’ are often used with recognitional function and bleached spatial meaning. However, when *derre* is used as a simple exophoric expression in some spoken varieties of Norwegian, its spatial meaning is retained. Another contributing factor might be the relatively higher usage frequency of identity demonstratives compared to simulative demonstratives.

To sum up, the concept of a cycle in simulative demonstrative development is complicated by conflicting mechanisms. On one hand, the final stages of this cycle are driven by processes such as reanalysis and phonetic reduction, which might result in attrition. These processes would potentially lead simulative demonstratives and identity demonstratives towards similar outcomes. On the other hand, the principle of ‘one form, one meaning’ inhibits the progression of the simulative demonstrative cycle. This might preclude the use of the term *cycle* in this context.

4.7 Conclusion

This study has investigated the use of Norwegian simulative demonstratives, particularly the emergence and functional diversification of complex forms like *sånn her* 'such here' and *sånn der* 'such there'. The reinforcement with the locative elements *her* 'here' and *der* 'there' has led to the emergence of a new set of simulative demonstratives that are specialized in signalling either contrasting exophoric reference or in endophoric functions such as introducing hearer-new referents and hedging in discourse.

The corpus-based analysis revealed that, unlike identity demonstratives which can be reinforced and eventually replaced by locative expressions, simulative demonstratives do not follow this pattern of cyclic renewal. There are conflicting mechanisms leading to either linguistic innovation or the retention of established forms, which may add to an explanation for why Norwegian simulative demonstratives do not undergo a full cycle of renewal.

Prototypicalization in cyclic change

Ittamar Erb and Mira Ariel

It is only in normal cases that the use of a word is clearly laid out in advance for us; we know, are in no doubt, what we have to say in this or that case. The more abnormal the case, the more doubtful it becomes what we are to say. And if things were quite different from what they actually are—if there were, for instance, no characteristic expression of pain, of fear, of joy; if rule became exception, and exception rule; or if both became phenomena of roughly equal frequency—our normal language-games would thereby lose their point.

(Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §142)

5.1 Introduction

Linguistic constructions are by definition productive, but they often lose their productivity over time. Why is that? What drives the repeated emergence of new constructions for functions that could still be conveyed by other, seemingly productive, dedicated constructions? In this chapter, we propose that such trajectories of language change may be rooted in cognition and grounded in a structural bias of mental categories towards their prototypical properties. We term the diachronic trajectory following this bias **prototypicalization**. In prototypicalization, constructions specialize for their prototypical tasks in discourse over time, gradually losing their productivity in the process. The construction's loss of productivity motivates the emergence of a novel construction which would express the discourse tasks that the older one can no longer perform.

We argue that prototypicalization may explain the common phenomenon of **possessive splits**, whereby different forms specialize for different subfunctions of possession. In the prototypicalization of possessives, a general possessive construction becomes associated with nouns denoting entities typically conceptualized as possessed, such as kinship relations and body parts (= inalienable entities). Because of this association, the construction will become less accessible to speakers when they wish to express non-prototypical possessive relations (= alienable relations). This in turn may drive the mobilization of alternative grammatical devices for these tasks. As the older construction's association with prototypical

possession strengthens, a novel device will be more frequent and may grammaticalize as a possessive construction. Thus, the prototypicalization claim involves two key hypotheses: (i) prototypical properties of abstract linguistic constructions are represented by speakers; and (ii) novel constructions first occur in contexts which are not prototypical for their function. We present supporting evidence from corpora, as well as experimental data, concerning two pronominal possessive constructions in Hebrew. Prototypicalization is of course not restricted to possessive constructions. As a case in point, we will shortly discuss the applicability of prototypicalization to the Jespersen Cycle of negation, arguing that it is at least compatible with a prototypicalization motivation.

Most crucially for this chapter, we propose that (i) and (ii) explain cyclic shifts undergone by possessive constructions. As is often the case, the cyclic shifts involved here are subject to competing motivations. Conformity of speakers to their speech community triggers an automatic cognitive process which brings about a gradual reduction of the possessive construction to its prototypical (inalienable) discourse profile and reduces the expressive power of the construction. The counteracting power of expressivity then comes in, motivating the evolution of a new possessive construction, initially predominantly used for the non-prototypical (alienable) functions. In due course, however, the newly evolved construction itself gradually reduces to the prototypical possessive function. This cyclic change thus reflects an onomasiological cycle in which constructions used for a certain function are repeatedly replaced by more recent, possibly etymologically unrelated constructions through similar mechanisms. Nonetheless, we propose that the onomasiological cycle is driven by semasiological change: fluctuations in the functions of specific forms (Hansen 2020b).

Prototypicalization follows from assumptions made in cognitive linguistics and usage-based approaches that grammar emerges as a result of general learning and categorization mechanisms when applied to experienced patterns of language use (Bybee 2001, 2006b; Ariel 2008; Goldberg 2019). Such patterns are naturally conditioned by the communicative goals of speakers. We maintain that the communicative goals instantiating a construction's prototype are consistently privileged in discourse (Bybee and Eddington 2006). Prototypicalization is thus rooted in the natural interplay of general cognitive processes with the structure of discourse.

The theoretical significance of our proposal lies in emphasizing the role of cognitive mechanisms and the accumulation of individual speech events driving language change. Prototypicalization complements previous theories tying diachronic processes to variation in grammar and discourse (Hopper 1991; Croft 2010), by specifying relations between layers in the grammar and systematically pointing to contexts in discourse where variation of grammatical forms is expected. It also offers a generalized mechanism driving speakers to innovate linguistic forms. The advantage of prototypicalization is that it explains

innovation not via speakers' assumed desires to be special (as in [Haspelmath's \(2000\) Extravagance principle](#)), but via their normal communicative behaviors and needs.

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. We begin by presenting our theoretical assumptions in [Section 5.2](#), followed by our proposal for prototypicalization through the example of possessive constructions in [Section 5.3](#). We then present our case study of Hebrew pronominal possessive constructions, supporting the predictions falling from prototypicalization with data from corpora and an acceptability judgement task experiment in [Section 5.4](#). We conclude with a discussion of the role of prototypicalization in explaining cyclic language changes in [Section 5.5](#).

5.2 Theoretical background

We adopt a usage-based approach to language, assuming that speakers' linguistic knowledge (grammar) emerges through generalizations made by speakers over their linguistic experience, noting common and distinct properties of forms and functions ([Barlow and Kemmer 2000](#)). Following Construction Grammar, we specifically view grammar as an interrelated, multidimensional network of conventionalized pairs of form and function associations ([Goldberg 1995, 2003, 2019](#), *inter alia*). Constructions may range from simple, formally specified monomorphemic lexical items (e.g. the noun *cat*) to abstract syntactic structures which include empty slots (the adnominal possessive English construction [N]'s [N], with two open nominal slots).

Identifying the productivity of constructions, their boundaries, and their shifts over time is particularly challenging. As discussed by [Perek \(2018, 2020\)](#), the fact that speakers have not produced certain combinations of forms does not mean that those combinations are actually impossible. To uncover the factors constraining productivity, it is not enough to examine current distributions. It is necessary to examine speakers' present grammar and test it for the limits of their openness to innovation. Within cognitive linguistics research, evidence from experiments ([Suttle and Goldberg 2011](#)) and computational models ([Watson et al. 2021](#)) suggests that construction productivity results from patterns of construction usage, notably the meanings and relative frequencies of the lexical items in the construction. The acceptability of a coinage is then determined by its semantic similarity to the attested instances and affected by properties of their distribution.

A second basic theoretical assumption comes from prototype theory and its applications in linguistics ([Rosch and Mervis 1975](#); [Lakoff 1987](#); [Geeraerts 1997](#); [Bybee 2006b](#); see [Taylor 2019](#) for a review). The theory is concerned with the structure of categories, claiming that they need not necessarily be thought of as discrete sets with rigid boundaries defined logically by clear-cut inclusion conditions.

Instead, categories may also be constructed ‘bottom-up’, as aggregates of related entities. The elements of these aggregates may stand in relations of family resemblance to each other, meaning that while there is a set of properties associated with the category, it is not necessary for each and every member of the category to manifest all properties, and there need not be a single property that holds for each and every member. Crucially, the internal structure of categories, resulting from its members and their properties, determines their boundaries: whether an entity will be judged to be an appropriate member of a category will be determined by its degree of similarity to the prototypical members. Such effects are attested in linguistic behaviour and termed prototype effects.

Bybee and Eddington’s (2006) investigation of adjectival complements of Spanish change-of-state verbs provided evidence for prototype effects in language. In an acceptability judgement task, participants graded the acceptability of verb + predicate adjective pairs (e.g. *ponerse nervioso*, ‘become nervous’) taken from a corpus. The authors found that similarity to high-frequency types had a positive effect on the acceptability of low-frequency complements. Taking the high-frequency complements to be prototypical members of the adjectival-complement category and low-frequency ones as instances of category expansion, the central members of the categories were found to affect category boundaries, providing evidence for prototype effects. We remain agnostic with regard to the nature of cognitive representations of prototypes, an issue we will briefly discuss in section 5.3.2.

When considering patterns of form and function in discourse, we take two complementary perspectives. First, we take an onomasiological point of view: considering communicative goals of speakers independently of the linguistic devices used to achieve them. From this perspective, it is obvious that not all communicative goals are equal, and some are more significant to speakers than others. We refer to these more salient goals as **privileged communicative tasks**—the interactional acts most useful to speakers in a specific functional domain. In the functional domain of possession, we take the privileged communicative tasks to be definite reference to inalienable concepts.

Then, taking a semasiological perspective, we take a specific construction as a starting point. We refer to the most frequent conditions in which speakers use a construction as its **prototypical discourse profile**. While (initially) not conventionalized, we assume that despite their apparent theoretical redundancy, these are often stored as part of the grammar (see Ariel 2008: ch. 5 on the role of salient discourse profiles). This assumption fits the more general claim that sufficiently salient linguistic experiences are independently stored in memory (Goldberg 1995, 2006; Bybee 2001). We will argue that prototypicalization arises because representations of prototypical discourse profiles affect the productivity of their construction, since they discourage speakers from using the construction in different, specifically non-prototypical contexts.

5.3 Prototypicalization

5.3.1 Prototypical possession and inalienability splits

In her typological review of possessive constructions, [Aikhenvald \(2013\)](#) distinguishes three core meanings of possessive relations conveyed by possessive constructions crosslinguistically: (a) ownership (of property), (b) part-whole relations (including body parts), and (c) kinship relations. The latter two differ from the first as they are inherently relational, such as a leg with respect to a body, a parent with respect to their child, and so on. Such relations are defined as inalienable (contrasted with alienable) and are often expressed by specialized constructions, giving rise to inalienability splits, where two (or more) possessive constructions alternate as a function of the possessed lexical items or the concepts they convey (e.g. [Nichols 1988](#); [Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1996](#); [Haspelmath 2015](#); and see [Chousou-Polydouri et al. 2023](#) and [Haspelmath 2017](#) for debates on the definition).

Encoding of inalienability splits in the grammar varies widely crosslinguistically. In some languages, the distinction is coded for certain nouns, with a dedicated possessive construction used only with a closed set of conceptually inalienable nouns (e.g. Maltese: [Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1996](#)). In other languages, different constructions are used with the same nouns to express alienable and inalienable relations respectively (e.g. Navajo, Naani: [Nichols 1988](#)). The nouns and conceptual relations considered inalienable also vary crosslinguistically. Still, in languages marking inalienability, kinship terms and/or body parts are nearly always categorized as inalienable, and relations of ownership and natural objects are alienable ([Nichols 1988](#); [Dahl and Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1998](#); [Haspelmath 2017](#); [Chousou-Polydouri et al. 2023](#)).

Inalienability splits are often argued to emerge diachronically, where older possessive constructions become specialized for inalienable possession ([Nichols 1988](#); [Claudi and Heine 1989](#); [Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1996](#); [Haspelmath 2015, 2017](#)). However, the diachronic mechanisms at work are still a matter of debate. Form-based explanations appeal to formal reduction processes (e.g. affix fusion) undergone by frequently possessed nouns, giving rise to the specialized marking of inalienable possession ([Nichols 1988](#); [Haspelmath 2017](#)). These are insufficient for cases where there is no formal change for inalienable possessive markers (as we will see for Hebrew).

Functional explanations, on the other hand, propose that inalienability splits are created via restricted contextual expansion of new constructions. Novel constructions are argued to emerge for communicative reasons, to mark non-prototypical, alienable possession in cases where speakers want to draw special attention ([Haspelmath 2015, 2017](#)). Inhibition mechanisms then prevent the newer construction from expanding to the prototypical possessive contexts, giving rise to

differential possessive marking; that is, inalienability splits (Claudi and Heine 1989; Haspelmath 2015, 2017). These explanations fail to account for the gradual expansion of the newer construction, which ends up spreading to prototypical contexts (e.g. as reported for Coptic in Haspelmath 2015).

We will not attempt to refute these proposals. In fact, we believe it is quite probable that these mechanisms work in tandem in shaping the particular characteristics of inalienability splits in different languages. We do, however, argue that prototypicalization fills gaps left by previous proposals. Prototypicalization provides a single motivation, which accounts for both functional and formal properties of inalienability splits. It also provides a unified explanation for different kinds of splits, regardless of their formal specificities. Prototypicalization then naturally accounts for the cyclic evolution of possessive constructions.

5.3.2 Prototypicalization of possessives

Prototypicalization is a trajectory of language change in which a construction gradually specializes for its prototypical discourse profile(s). This process brings about a reduction in productivity. As the construction progressively loses its productivity, a novel construction emerges for the same abstract function (here possession) in order to serve uses which are too different from prototypical possession. This construction, too, gradually specializes for more prototypical contexts, which is why it may undergo the same processes that the older one did, resulting in cyclic change. This is the possessive cycle.

We begin our description with a single, productive possessive construction, which can accommodate any possessive relation.¹ However, the fact that the construction is unrestricted does not entail that its use is completely free. As some communicative tasks are privileged by speakers, we expect them to be much more salient and frequent. In the conceptual domain of possession, we assume that the relevant privileged communicative task is reference to socially and psychologically important entities—notably family members and body parts—that are inherently conceptualized relative to a possessor (= inalienable entities). In contrast, we assume that reference to entities that are not often conceptualized relative to a possessor (= alienable entities) is an underprivileged communicative task of possessives. The prominence of the privileged communicative tasks gives rise to the prototypical discourse profiles of possessive constructions—reference to inalienable entities. We propose that their salience has a far-reaching effect on grammar, since these discourse profiles are mentally represented.

¹ Since the relevant diachronic change is cyclic, our decision to start from a single, general construction is merely for ease of exposition.

We remain agnostic with regard to the degree of schematicity of these mental representations; that is, how detailed their form and function are. Exemplar theories (e.g. Bybee 2006b) have argued that frequent items (here, frequently possessed nouns) are explicitly represented in the minds of speakers as a single unit (e.g. [*my mom*]). Such storage does not rule out the simultaneous derivation of abstract representations (e.g. [*PRONOMINAL-POSSESSOR N*, where *N* is inalienable]). Representations may also stand at an intermediate level of abstraction, not easily amenable to linguistic formulation (see Divjak and Arppe 2013).² Finally, it is possible that all these options hold, and that both salient discourse profiles and frequent exemplars are redundantly represented with their construction (Ariel 2002). The crucial point for our argument is that prototypical discourse profiles have an impact on the grammar of their construction. This impact has dramatic consequences on the construction's diachronic trajectory.

Once the prototypical discourse profile is represented as part of speakers' knowledge of the construction, prototype effects will be manifest: novel uses of the possessive construction will need to be similar to the prototypical discourse profile. The stored prototypes have a negative effect on productivity, since strong constraints on similarity render the construction 'less open' to accommodating lexical items that do not fit the profile. As the productivity of the construction declines, it becomes less adept at conveying non-prototypical messages. Consequently, the frequency of these uses of the construction in discourse will decrease. This creates a spiral process whereby the increased relative frequency of the prototypical discourse profile will bolster their representation, increasing the demand for similarity to them in usage. Now, as long as the relative frequencies of speakers' communicative tasks are maintained, a feedback loop will be created: increased proportion of the prototypical discourse profile will repeatedly strengthen the prototype effects, which will further increase the prototypical discourse profile's relative frequency, and so on. The feedback loop comes to a halt when the construction loses its productivity altogether and becomes restricted to what was previously its most prototypical use.

This specialization means that speakers have lost a linguistic device which fulfils non-prototypical communicative needs. Assuming they still need to communicate underprivileged communicative tasks (those most different from the construction's prototypical discourse profile), even if not so commonly, they will become deprived of a grammatical device for these tasks. At this point, while speakers have a construction readily available for their reference to inalienable entities, it is unfit for reference to (some) alienable relations, a task it once served. It is thus exactly in

² In fact, cross-speaker variation in representation and abstraction processes may be what gives rise to the cross-linguistic variation in lexical/pragmatic distinctions of alienability splits.

the context of underprivileged communicative tasks that novel constructions are expected to emerge.³

This situation resembles a grammatical gap in which there is a communicative need with no device within regular means of morphosyntactic composition (Vogel 2023). However, there does not need to be an absolute gap for a renewal process to be initiated. The old construction need not become completely inapplicable to non-prototypical contexts. It is enough for the old construction to become significantly less available for underprivileged communicative tasks. This scenario effectively creates a ‘communicative vacuum’, where the force of expressivity may compel speakers to seek alternative linguistic means for less typical communication needs. This vacuum may result in a new grammatical construction. Hence, according to prototypicalization, the necessity to express non-prototypical functions acts as a catalyst for the grammaticization of innovative structures.

As a final theoretical note, note that prototypicalization depends on conditions of onomasiological consistency. Prototypicalization should be regarded as a semasiological cycle as it concerns changes in the functions of specific forms (Hansen 2020b). Still, two onomasiological conditions must hold for it to occur. First, the relevant privileged communicative tasks must remain consistent through different stages of language change for the specific communicative tasks to repeatedly gain a privileged status in discourse. Only then will representations of prototypical discourse profiles emerge, be reinforced, and bring about stronger and stronger prototype effects. Second, the proportion of privileged versus underprivileged communicative tasks must remain relatively stable (cf. Lass’s 1997 Uniformitarian Assumption) for the new construction to follow the same trajectory. While these conditions are far from trivial, we propose that at least some communicative tasks remain prevalent for speakers living in very different times within rather different socio-cultural environments. References to family members and body parts are good candidates for such stable, salient goals within human communication.

As a cognitively driven trajectory of change, prototypicalization generates both cognitive and diachronic hypotheses that may be tested against psycholinguistic and historical data respectively. The hypotheses in (1) are cognitive hypotheses, phrased in terms of mental representations in speakers’ minds.

- (1) a. Prototypical discourse profiles of productive constructions are independently stored.
- b. Representations of prototypical discourse profiles reduce productivity.

The diachronic hypotheses in (2) below are of a semasiological nature; that is, they take two competing forms as their point of departure and predict their distributions across functionally defined contexts in the course of their evolution.

³ Cf. Dahl and Koptjevskaja-Tamm (1998), who claim that in grammaticalization items expand from strong to weak contexts in terms of their information value; i.e. their informativeness.

Note that even when a construction serves all communicative tasks, the distribution is skewed in favour of the privileged ones, which drives the later change. The stages below are not discrete. We propose that subtle changes in the cognitive availability of a construction's representations are exactly those that drive large-scale changes in distribution patterns. Therefore, variation across speakers gives rise to overlapping contexts for the two constructions in discourse. As can be seen below, the change is clearly cyclic, with the distribution of (2e) equivalent to that in (2a).

	<i>Change stage</i>	<i>Old construction</i>	<i>New construction</i>
(2)	a. <i>Prior</i>	All communicative tasks	–
	b. <i>Initial</i>	All communicative tasks	Underprivileged communicative tasks
	c. <i>Intermediate</i>	Privileged communicative tasks	Underprivileged communicative tasks
	d. <i>Late</i>	Privileged communicative tasks	All communicative tasks
	e. <i>Post</i>	(Privileged communicative tasks) ⁴	All communicative tasks
	f.	...	...

This trajectory is by no means obligatory. One should not expect every construction to gradually specialize for its prototypical discourse function(s). Not all discourse patterns end up being coded in the grammars of speakers because the motivations that shape these patterns are manifold and are not evenly distributed in discourse (Ariel 2008, 2009).⁵ First, there is probably a cognitive bias countering specialization to the prototype, pressuring speakers to prefer a single form for a single (general) function. Specifically in our case, expressions referring to possessed entities are affected by many different factors, such as their conceptualization, their individuation in context, and the verbs with which they cooccur (Croft 2010). Some of these factors are sensitive to social circumstances, which vary across cultures and through history. Furthermore, morpho-syntactic properties of possessive constructions might also affect whether alienability splits are grammaticized at all, as proposed by Nichols (1988).

We now proceed to provide evidence supporting hypotheses (1–2) as a unified framework for explaining diachronic trajectories of change, focusing on two competing pronominal possessive constructions in Hebrew. Because of the

⁴ The older construction might perish completely or remain in very few contexts of highly privileged tasks, as attested, for example, in Coptic (Haspelmath 2015).

⁵ This is also why not all languages manifest alienability splits.

discontinuous history of Hebrew, a diachronic review of the two constructions is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, we zoom in on key moments in the co-development of the two constructions and argue that they support our proposal.

We begin by presenting corpus data from Present-Day Hebrew (PDH) corresponding to the distribution in (2d). Based on corpus and experimental data, we will then argue that prototypical discourse profiles of each construction are independently stored in speakers' memory, supporting hypothesis (1). We then present corpus data from Biblical Hebrew (BH), when there was only a single construction for pronominal possession. We examine the structural predecessor of the structure that ended up grammaticizing as the later possessive construction, showing that it was used almost exclusively for underprivileged communicative possessive tasks, corresponding to the distributions of (2b). These two findings together support the trajectory of prototypicalization: the finding that prototypical discourse profiles of both constructions are independently represented supports the claim that both must go through the same cognitive processes that motivate cyclic change. We thus aim to provide support for the following claims:

- (3) a. Prototypical discourse profiles are independently stored
(= (1a) above).
- b. Novel constructions emerge in contexts of underprivileged
communicative tasks (= (2b)).

5.4 Evidence from Hebrew pronominal possessives

PDH provides speakers with two pronominal possessive constructions: a synthetic construction, in which a possessive suffix is attached to the possessed nominal (4a), and an analytic construction, in which the possessed nominal is modified by the preposition *fel* 'of' (4b), denoting the possessor through inflection for person, number, and grammatical gender (except for first person). In both constructions, the noun (*xaver*, 'friend', in (4)) refers to the possessed entity and the pronominal element refers to its possessor.

4. a. *xaver.i/xa/o*
friend.POSS.1/2.MASC.SG/3.MASC.SG
My/your/his friend
- b. *xaver fel.i/xa/o*
friend OF.1/2.MASC.SG/3.MASC.SG
Friend of mine/yours/his

While sometimes considered synonymous (e.g. [Schwarzwald 2013](#)), several important differences between them have been identified in both spoken and written language. Many have noted their different frequencies and the different linguistic and social conditions of their use (see [Rosén 1977](#); [Shatil 1997](#); [Dubnov 2000](#) for spoken language; see [Ornan 1965](#); [Avioz 2004](#) for written language). Claims about the synthetic construction being more restricted are consistent across different studies of spoken Hebrew. [Shatil \(1997\)](#) found that while the analytic construction hosts proper names and loan words, these nouns do not occur in the synthetic construction in his data. [Dubnov \(2000\)](#) similarly argued that the analytic construction is the default for pronominal possession based on its much higher frequency. Examining a myriad of semantic, syntactic, phonological, and etymological factors, she concludes that even though the synthetic construction is highly associated with nouns denoting inalienable and relational concepts, the choice of construction cannot be attributed to any single factor.

We propose that the synchronic distribution reflects a process of language change in which the recent analytic construction is gradually replacing the older synthetic one. The synthetic construction began as the single pronominal possessive construction in what we take to be the initial stage of Biblical Hebrew (BH). In PDH, it has lost its status as the default possessive construction, however, and its occurrences in discourse are now mainly fossilized instances. This trajectory is compatible with the diachronic descriptions of [Kutscher \(1982\)](#). Crucially, we argue that even though the two constructions show great differences, they are both going through the very same diachronic trajectory: prototypicalization. This is because both are coded for the same abstract discourse function; that is, possession. They are thus susceptible to the same communicative forces, which drive them in the same diachronic direction. Crucially, however, the two constructions are at different stages of that process.

We will now present evidence that pronominal possessive constructions in Hebrew undergo prototypicalization. First, we will present data from a spoken language corpus and an acceptability judgement experiment supporting hypothesis (1a), suggesting that specific prototypical discourse profiles are stored for each construction. We then turn to a corpus of BH, showing a distribution that corresponds to (2b), suggesting that the predecessor of the newer analytic construction was first employed for underprivileged communicative needs; that is, in non-prototypical possessive contexts.

5.4.1 Prototypical discourse profiles are stored independently

First, we argue that the distribution of the synthetic construction is determined lexically; that is, that its occurrence depends mostly on the specific lexical item denoting the possessed entity. If our analysis is correct, the representation of the

possessive constructions includes stored single units (which can but need not be produced compositionally). As most of these nominals are inalienable, we take this to mean that speakers store prototypical discourse profiles of the synthetic construction. We will then move on to the analytic construction and show that some possessed kinship terms exhibit idiosyncratic grammatical behaviour: they occur in syntactic positions typically reserved for definite NPs, despite the fact that they are not so marked.⁶ We will show that not all inalienable terms exhibit this behaviour. Only some kinship terms do and only when (analytically) possessed, suggesting that they must be stored as idiosyncratic single units in the speakers' grammar.

5.4.1.1 Lexical representations of the synthetic construction

In order to characterize the distributions of the pronominal possessive constructions, we manually extracted all their instances from transcriptions of 155 spoken conversations in the Haifa Corpus of Spoken Hebrew (Maschler et al. 2021)⁷ and the Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew (CoSIH),⁸ yielding a total of 825 tokens. Each token was initially tagged for its possessive construction and the nominal type in its possessee position. The type and token counts are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Type and token counts of the two pronominal possessive constructions in two spoken PD Hebrew corpora

	Synthetic	Analytic
Tokens	171	654
Types	55	286

The analytic construction is more productive according to several criteria. First, it is much more frequent than the synthetic one, testifying to its wider use in the spoken language. Second, it has a greater type frequency, meaning that it is used to express possession with a larger number of nominals. This shows that the analytic construction is used more widely and with greater variety. Third, we adopted Baayen's (2009) measure of **potential productivity**, which probes the construction's tendency to expand and host more lexical forms (Table 5.2). This measurement makes use of the construction's frequency of hapax legomena; that is, the number of single-token-types or 'one-offs'. The potential productivity of a construction is computed by dividing the number of hapax legomena in the corpus

⁶ Note that definite reference is also a privileged communicative task of possessives crosslinguistically (Langacker 1995; Haspelmath 1999). See also Erb (2024) for Hebrew.

⁷ <https://sites.google.com/humanities.haifa.ac.il/corpus>.

⁸ <http://cosih.com>.

by the total number of its tokens. We found the analytic construction to be more productive according to this criterion as well.

Table 5.2 Potential productivity of the two pronominal possessive constructions

	Synthetic	Analytic
# hapaxes	33	223
Potential productivity	0.19	0.34

In fact, the two constructions occurred in near-complementary distribution in terms of the lexical items they hosted: the great majority of possessed nominal types only occurred in one of the two constructions (303/321, 94.4 per cent). Moreover, many of the few nominals that did occur in both constructions were associated with different meanings as a function of the construction in which they occurred (e.g. *ax feli* ‘my brother’ used referentially vs. *axi* ‘(my) bro’ used as a vocative, not directed at a sibling in the attested uses). Together with the indications that the analytic construction is the productive one of the two, we interpret the relative distribution of nominals across the two constructions to mean that the choice between them is lexically determined to a large extent.⁹

Examining the semantics of the possessed nominals across the two constructions, we found the synthetic one to be strongly associated with inalienable possession. We considered tokens as inalienable if they referred to kin relations (e.g. *axot*, ‘sister’), body parts (e.g. *lev*, ‘heart’), or an entity in the personal domain (*jem* ‘name’).¹⁰ We found that the synthetic construction hosted a much larger proportion of inalienable nominals than the analytic one, as seen in Table 5.3. The association of the synthetic construction with inalienable possession was found to be significant in Fisher’s exact test ($p < 0.0001$). We conclude that the prototypical discourse profile of the synthetic construction fits the privileged discourse task of possessives (inalienable possession).

Remarkably, however, the analytic construction is also frequently used with inalienable possession, as the majority of the analytic constructions refer to inalienable entities (356/653, 54.52 per cent). This was corroborated by comparing

⁹ The story is actually more complex. Other portions of our research show that the synthetic construction is somewhat more frequent and flexible in some genres of written Hebrew (Erb and Melnik in prep). However, even in these genres, the analytic constructions maintain higher rates of potential productivity, suggesting that it is the primary possessive construction for Hebrew speakers when they compositionally convey possession by a pronominalized referent. The important point with respect to the current issue is that the synthetic construction’s strong association with inalienable possession suggests it is part of speakers’ grammars.

¹⁰ Recall that the exact concepts/nouns considered inalienable are language- and culture-dependent. We therefore adopted a conservative heuristic in classifying the semantic profiles of the constructions, counting nouns as inalienable only if they referred to concepts that tend to be inalienable crosslinguistically.

Table 5.3 Proportion of inalienable nominals across the two constructions

	Synthetic	Analytic	Non-possessive NPs
Inalienable	143	356	15
Alienable	28	297	121

its proportion of inalienable references to their distribution in a random sample of non-possessive NPs,¹¹ which contained only a minority of inalienable nominals (15/136, 11.03 per cent). A significant association between inalienability and the analytic construction was found in Fisher's exact test ($p < 0.0001$). It follows that the prototypical discourse profile of the analytic construction also corresponds to the privileged communicative tasks of possession. At the same time, while both constructions have the same prototypical discourse profile, they are associated with it to a different degree: even though the analytic construction uses tend to fit its prototypical profile in the majority of cases (and much more frequently than the general use of inalienables), the synthetic construction is almost exclusively dedicated to it.

These findings support both of our hypotheses. Considering that the synthetic construction is nearly restricted to prototypical possession, and the analytic construction is strongly associated with it (although not limited to it), the relative distribution of the constructions corresponds perfectly to the one depicted in (2d). Furthermore, as the two constructions stand in contrastive distribution in terms of their function, but nearly complementary distribution in terms of the lexical items they host, we may conclude that the uses of the synthetic, more restricted construction are licensed lexically, with the non-restricted construction used systematically elsewhere. Since most of the lexemes in the synthetic construction denote prototypically possessed entities, we conclude that speakers must have independent representations of the prototypical discourse profile(s) of the synthetic construction, supporting hypothesis (3a). We will provide data suggesting that speakers independently store prototypical discourse profiles of the analytic construction as well.

5.4.1.2 Lexical representations of the analytic construction

In PDH, some nouns within the analytic pronominal possessive construction exhibit idiosyncratic morphosyntactic behaviour. Some analytically possessed kinship terms occur in syntactic positions typically reserved for definite NPs, despite the fact that they are not explicitly marked by the definite article *ha* 'the'.

¹¹ In each text in our corpus, one in five non-possessive noun phrases was extracted manually, up to a maximum of 10 extracted nominals per text. The minimum number of nominals extracted from a single text was five.

We note that definiteness marking is obligatory for common nouns in Hebrew. These analytically possessed expressions, we now argue, must be stored independently, as single units, in the grammar of speakers. This is because, taken by themselves, neither the possessed nouns nor the possessive construction are individually coded as definite. Crucially to the matter at hand, all of these nouns denote kinship terms: a privileged communicative task of possession. Speakers thus have representations of prototypical discourse profiles not only for the non-productive synthetic construction but also for the productive analytic one.

Generally speaking, PDH speakers must mark definite NPs with the definite article *ha* (5a). Indefinite NPs, on the other hand, show no explicit formal marking (5b). Analytically possessed NPs are generally no different and are usually marked with the definite article when definite (6). Note that PDH has additional cues marking definite NPs, including the accusative definite marker *et* (6a) and definite agreement on a modifying adjectival phrase (6b). While these cues occur in addition to the definite article with definite lexical NPs, they also occur with inherently definite NPs such as those headed by proper names (7), which block the definite article.

- (5) a. *ha-xatul megarger*
 the-cat purrs
 ‘The cat purrs.’

- b. *xatul megarger*
 cat purrs
 ‘A cat purrs.’

- (6) a. *ani lo ohevet et ha-glida fel.ahem*
 I no like ACC the-ice-cream OF.MASC.3.PL
 ‘I don’t like their ice cream.’

- b. *ha-farwal ha-lavan fel.i kan*
 the-salwar the-white OF.1.SG here
 ‘My white salwar is here.’

- (7) *hi ohevet et kalu ha-xamud*
 she loves ACC kalu the-cute
 ‘She loves cute Kalu.’

In our corpus study, few analytic tokens occurred in configurations similar to the one in (6–7); that is, with no definite article but still with other definite markings (6/653, 0.92 per cent). The possessed nominals in these configurations included only three types, all denoting close kin relations: *aba* ‘dad (8a)’, *ax* ‘brother (8b)’, and *savta* ‘grandma’. Furthermore, out of all of the analytic tokens

of these nominals, in all syntactic contexts, only a single one (1/86, 1.1 per cent) was marked with the definite article, raising serious doubts about the reliability of the definite article as an indicator of definiteness for these types. The remaining 79 tokens of these types did not occur in direct object positions, nor were they modified with adjectival phrases, leaving no reliable formal indication of their definiteness.

- (8) a. *rait* *et* *aba* *fel.i* *hajom* *xozer*
saw ACC dad OF.1.SG today return.

‘I saw my dad(=definite) return today.’

- b. *ha-brit* *fel* *ax* *fel.i* *ha-katan*
the-bris of brother OF.1.SG the-little

‘My little brother’s bris.’

To overcome the shortcomings of the corpus data, Erb (2024) conducted an acceptability judgement task experiment to reveal the possible role of the analytic construction for licensing definiteness. In the experiment, participants were asked to rate the acceptability of sentences with the target NPs placed in direct object position marked with the definite accusative marker *et* (such as (6a), (7), and (8a)). Sentence acceptability was thus a function of the speakers’ willingness to interpret the target NP as definite. Targets were manipulated formally for the occurrence or absence of the definite article *ha* and the analytic pronominal possessive, and for the semantic category of the possessed nominal: comparing kinship terms to non-relational animate nouns. A simplified example of an experimental set is presented in (9):¹²

- (9) a. *ha-atsanit* *xibka* *et* *ha-* *aba* *fel.a*
the-runner hugged ACC the- dad OF-FEM.3.SG

‘The runner hugged her dad.’

- b. *ha-atsanit* *xibka* *et* *aba* *fel.a*
the-runner hugged ACC dad OF.FEM.3.SG

‘The runner hugged her dad.’

- c. *ha-atsanit* *xibka* *et* *ha-* *aba*
the-runner hugged ACC the- dad

‘The runner hugged the dad.’

- d. *ha-atsanit* *xibka* *et* *aba*
the-runner hugged ACC dad

‘The runner hugged dad.’

¹² See Erb (2024) for the precise experimental data and results.

The results revealed that the analytic possessive facilitated definite interpretation for NPs that were not marked with the usually obligatory definite article ((8b), (9b)). Crucially, however, it did so only for some kinship terms. Other, non-relational, animate nouns were not acceptable in the same positions. Furthermore, the results revealed that kinship terms were divided into three distinct groups in terms of the effect the possessive had on them. One set of kinship terms was acceptable as definite also in their bare form ((9d)), suggesting definiteness may be attributed to the possessed nominal itself and not to its occurrence in the possessive construction. These terms, which behaved similarly to proper names (see (7)), included the immediate paternal kin terms *aba* ‘dad’, *ima* ‘mom’, *saba* ‘grandpa’, and *savta* ‘grandma’. Another group of kinship terms was indistinguishable from common nouns and required the definite article for definite interpretation, whether possessed or not ((6a), (9a, d)). These included all descending kin terms (e.g. *nexda* ‘granddaughter’) and some marital ones (e.g. *xamot* ‘mother-in-law’). Finally and most importantly, some kinship terms were accepted as definite while lacking the definite article only when they were marked with the analytic possessor ((8b), (9b)), but not when in bare form ((9d)). These included both horizontal and ascending kin relations (e.g. *doda* ‘aunt’, *ax* ‘brother’).

This final set of nominals showed beyond doubt that speakers must have representations of analytically possessed kinship terms. As neither of the components of these possessed kinship terms is interpreted as definite individually, the definiteness of the entire construction cannot be derived compositionally and hence must be independently represented. Recall that denoting kinship terms constitutes reference to inalienable entities, which was shown to be the prototypical discourse profile of both the analytic and synthetic constructions. It may thus be concluded that PDH speakers store independent representations of prototypical discourse profiles for both constructions, supporting hypothesis (3a). The finding that similar prototypical discourse profiles for both constructions are individually represented will serve our argument that both are undergoing the same semasiological change—change in the functions of specific forms—as a result of being subjected to the same onomasiological conditions—functional properties independent of specific forms.

5.4.2 Innovation for underprivileged tasks in Biblical Hebrew

We now wish to support the diachronic hypothesis (3b) that expressivity triggers the evolution of innovative constructions specifically in contexts of underprivileged communicative tasks. To do so, we analyse BH texts, which predate the rise of the analytic construction during the later period of Mishnaic Hebrew

(Kutscher 1982). Even though the synthetic construction is the dedicated linguistic device for communicating possession in BH, it is by no means the only one. Pat-El (2013) mentions three additional grammatical strategies for communicating possession. She stresses, however, that none were dedicated to this function. We zero in on one of these strategies, *afer le* ('that to'), which is argued to be the etymological source of the present-day analytic construction (Berman 1978; Pat-El 2013). Following Pat-El, we will argue that while this Biblical construction is used to convey possession in most cases, it is not conventionalized for this purpose. We will then show that it is nearly always used to refer to alienable possession, an underprivileged task of possession, supporting hypothesis (3b).

The analytic possessive marker *fel* evolved out of the BH structure *afer le* ('that-to'). This structure is composed of two components: the relativizer *afer*, connecting a nominal with a relative clause (RC) and the dative marker *le* which serves a myriad of functions in BH, one of which is denoting a possessor in predicative possessive clauses (Pat-El 2013). For these two separate elements to develop into a possessive marker with a conventionalized possessive function, they would need to occur adjacent to one another while conveying the target function. Speakers may then reanalyse them as a single unit (see Lehmann 2002). This occurred naturally when nominals were modified by a subject possessive RC, as in the attested example in (10a). This structure indeed resembles the later analytic construction, as exemplified in the made-up example in (10b).

The structures in (10a–b) share surface similarities, as abstracted in (10c). Linearly, both are composed of a lexical element denoting a possessee (the chariot), followed by grammatical elements, the last of which is pronominal and denotes a possessor (*afer lo/fel.o*, 'that is his/his'). The difference between the expressions lies in their underlying syntactic structure: the NP in (10a) includes a clausal structure of a subject RC. The only formal marking of the clausal structure in (10a) is the relativizer *afer*, as subject RCs in BH do not contain resumptive subject pronouns and possessive clauses do not include an explicit verb. Clausal structure is clearly evident in other uses of the relativizer-dative sequence. These include cases with an explicit verb in non-possessive RCs (11a) and an explicit subject NP in indirect object possessive RCs (11b).¹³

- (10) a. *merkevet ha-mifne afer lo*
 chariot.GEN the-second-in-command REL DAT.MASC.3.SG
 the second-in-command chariot that is his/his second in command's
 chariot. (Gen. 41.43)

¹³ Kutscher (1982) argues that the RC structure of *afer le* is apparent in its restriction to attributive positions. Indeed, the analytic possessive also occurs in predicative positions when it first appears in Mishnaic Hebrew.

- b. *merkevet ha-mifne fel.o*
 chariot.GEN the-second-in-command OF.MASC.3.SG
 his second in command's chariot
- c. POSSESSEE *afer l./fel*.POSSESSOR
- (11) a. *adonej-ha afer l.o yešad-a*
 master-POSS.FEM.3.SG REL DAT.MASC.3.SG intend-FEM.3.SG.PST
 Her master for whom she was intended. (Exo. 21.7)
- b. *ha-anafim afer lahem ha-riv*
 the-people REL DAT.MASC.3.PL the-fight
 The people which the fight was theirs. (Deu. 19.17)

In both of the examples in (11), the surface form does not correspond to the target possessive pattern of the analytic construction. In (11a), the pronominal dative does not denote a possessor but an indirect object of the verb *yašad* ('intend'), so there is no possessive relation conveyed between the RC head *adone.ha* ('her master') and the pronominal dative. In (11b), while the pronominal dative *lahem* does denote a possessor, it is a resumptive pronoun co-referential with the RC head, *anafim* ('people'). The possessive relation thus holds between the pronominal dative and the following lexical NP *ha-riv* ('the fight'). These do not correspond to the order in which the construction ended up grammaticizing (possessee–possessor). The relevant structures foreshadowing the analytic construction are thus cases in which *afer le* constitutes (i) a subject RC with (ii) a possessive clause.

To test our hypothesis that novel constructions first appear in contexts of underprivileged communicative tasks, we examined the (in)alienability of possessive subject RCs in BH. We extracted all pronominal *afer le* instances from the BH corpus using DICTA's Bible Search tool, which yielded 86 tokens. As not all instances of *afer le* are used to mark possession (alienable or inalienable), we first tagged each token for its RC syntactic form (subject or indirect object)¹⁴ and function (possessive or non-possessive). Our findings, presented in Table 5.4, are quite striking. The great majority of *afer le* RCs convey possession (85/86, 98.2 per cent). Of these, the majority are subject RCs (72/85 84.7 per cent), making them suitable candidates for grammaticizing into the analytic construction.¹⁵

Given the dominance of the target function in the uses of the source structure, it seems probable that the BH corpus testifies to the initial rise of a new construction. Still, we propose that there is no need to conclude that *afer le* conventionalized as

¹⁴ No other RC types were found in the sample.

¹⁵ We note that *fel* (*fe+le* 'REL+DAT') is structured on the pattern of *afer le*, *fe* being the Mishnaic counterpart of the (earlier) BH *afer*. One late Biblical *fe-IV* example is *mitat.o fe-li-shlomo*, 'his bed that (is) to Solomon/Solomon's bed' (Song of Songs 3, 7). Since these cases are extremely rare, we counted the Biblical *afer le* instead.

Table 5.4 Form and function of pronominal *afer le* RCs in BH

	Subject RC	Indirect object RC
Possessive RC	72 (83.7%)	13 (15.1%)
Non-possessive RC	1 (1.2%)	0

a possessive marker in BH. Instead, we believe that the distribution presented in Table 5.4 suggests that *afer le* is at an early or intermediate stage of conventionalization as a possessive marker (cf. Heine 2002). First, since both elements of the source construction are interpreted compositionally, there is no need to assume an independent status for the structure. Furthermore, while the great majority of contexts prompt speakers to interpret the expression as a possessive marker in the form of (10c), it still occurs in other configurations as well (11), motivating a compositional interpretation for the structure. This is further strengthened by the co-occurrence frequency of the strings (86), which is remarkably lower than the total frequencies of *afer* (4,459) and the pronominal dative (3,725) in the same corpus. Assuming we are correct, and the grammaticization of the analytic construction has just begun, we place the grammar of pronominal possession in BH in stages (2a) or (2b) of prototypicalization.

Now, to test whether the analytical construction indeed emerged in contexts of underprivileged communicative tasks, we examined the possessive relations it conveys. We tagged each possessive RC token for its (in)alienability, again considering denotation of kinship terms, body parts, and entities belonging to the personal domain as inalienable. The counts are presented in Table 5.5. The pattern is quite clear. Considering all possessive *afer le* RCs, the vast majority of clauses (80/85, 94.1 per cent) denote alienable possession. Zeroing in on subject RCs, the structure we argued to be the actual source for the analytic construction, the entire pool of tokens denotes alienable possession (72/72, 100 per cent). The data thus firmly confirm hypothesis (2b).

Table 5.5 Alienability counts of possessive *afer le* RCs in BH

	Subject RCs	Indirect object RC
Inalienable	0	5 (5.9%)
Alienable	72 (84.7%)	8 (9.4%)

Even though inalienable possessive RCs comprise only a small portion of the data (5/85, 5.9 per cent), this minority reveals a fundamental property of the

emerging construction. These inalienable uses indicate that the new construction is not exclusively used for alienables but may convey the general function of possession. If that is the case, it means that when it initially emerges, its prototypical discourse profile consists of alienable possession. This strongly contrasts with the possessive constructions in PDH, where the prototypical discourse profiles of both refer to inalienably possessed entities. Importantly, when considering the synchronic state of BH, it means that there is dissonance between the prototypical discourse profile of the emerging construction and the privileged communicative tasks of the general function it conveys. Considering this tension in the larger context of prototypicalization, it makes sense that as the older construction specializes more and more for its prototypical discourse profiles (inalienable possession), the tension between the prototypical profile of the new construction (alienable possession) and the privileged communicative tasks of the possessive function (inalienable possession) will drive the newer construction towards more privileged communicative contexts as well. As privileged communicative tasks are by definition more frequent than the underprivileged ones, it makes sense that their relative frequencies within the emerging construction uses will increase.

Finally, when considering the lexical make-up of possessive *afer le* structures, we found that nearly half of its occurrences (40/85, 47.1 per cent) consisted of relatives headed specifically by *kol* ('all/entirety'). The possessive NPs in this structure convey the meaning of 'everything (alienable) that the possessor owned' (*kol afer lo*, 'all that is his'). In contrast, when *kol* occurs in the synthetic possessive construction, it conveys the relation 'the possessor's entirety' (*kulo*, 'all of him'), an inalienable relation. This division of labour between the two constructions with regard to *kol* suggests that language users routinely made use of an analytic structure to perform an underprivileged communicative task when the alternative formulation was already associated with a privileged discourse task.

5.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, we proposed that prototypicalization is a trajectory of language change grounded in a bias of cognitive representations for their prototypical properties of usage. In prototypicalization, the prototypical discourse profiles of constructions are represented, causing the constructions to specialize and gradually lose their productivity. We provided evidence for independent representations of prototypical discourse profiles in [Section 5.4.1](#). As a construction becomes increasingly specialized, speakers are left without an adequate linguistic device for communicative tasks different from the prototype. This situation prompts

speakers to seek alternative linguistic means, which paves the way for the grammaticization of new constructions, specifically in contexts of underprivileged communicative tasks. In [Section 5.4.2](#), we presented data of an emerging construction, showing it indeed occurs mostly in underprivileged contexts. Prototypicalization constitutes an onomasiological cycle of change, in which constructions used for a certain function are repeatedly replaced by more recent ones through similar mechanisms ([Hansen 2020b](#)). We argued that similar mechanisms are in play for two constructions competing for the same function: expressing prototypical possession. We thus conclude that the two constructions are at different stages of the very same cyclic process of change.

Prototypicalization provides a fine-grained, cognitively grounded motivation for previous explanations for language change. [Hopper's \(1991\)](#) Principle of Layering specifies that functional domains (e.g. tense, or in our case, possession) are often encoded by a diversity of grammatical devices that grammaticized in different periods. [Croft \(2010\)](#) emphasizes that synchronic variation is not only a reflex of past change but is also a necessary condition for future change. Croft provides evidence that grammatical constructions consistently alternate with (potential) lexical sources for their function. Prototypicalization is concerned with the contexts for which old constructions specialize, as well as the contexts in which novel constructions first occur. It thus elaborates on Hopper's layering principle by specifying the relations between the layers in the grammar and provides a valuable addition to the ideas introduced by Croft, in systematically pointing to contexts in which variation is expected.

Prototypicalization motivates processes of renewal and the emergence of a novel construction for functions already performed by an existing one, instigated by changes in the older construction, namely its specialization and loss of productivity. It thus stands apart from the two types of explanations for cyclic change outlined in [Haspelmath \(2000\)](#), which include **reduction-first** and **periphrasis-first** explanations. In reduction-first or 'repair' explanations, formal reduction of an existing construction leads speakers to adopt novel, more explicit constructions for effective communication. Within periphrasis-first or extravagance explanations, novel constructions emerge independently of the older ones, when speakers use lexical forms for grammatical purposes in order to be extravagant; that is, to attract attention. Haspelmath argues against repair explanations by noting that new constructions can appear without any noticeable change in older ones. However, we find extravagance explanations lacking, at least in the case of possessives.

First, it seems that characterization of innovative uses leading to grammaticization as 'extravagant' might be overly emphatic. Haspelmath characterizes these expressions as 'elaborate' and 'vivid', which fits cases with rich lexical sources. This is not the case when the sources are themselves grammatical. In our case

study, for example, it is not clear how the predecessor of the analytic construction presented in [Section 5.4.2](#) is more vivid than its synthetic counterpart, except for being more marked. Second, extravagance explanations do not provide clear predictions for the contexts in which novel constructions will arise. Haspelmath recognizes this problem but argues that it does not provide enough grounds to dismiss his theory. Although we concur, this points to a greater issue: it is unclear how unusual, extravagant linguistic behaviour can be systematic enough to lead to the widespread adoption and grammatical integration of an innovative construction. We embrace [Vogel's \(2023\)](#) view that innovative constructions only become grammatical through routine use. As Haspelmath does not offer constraints on the contexts of extravagant linguistic behaviour, extravagance in itself is not sufficient to explain how innovative expressions routinize and grammaticize.

A prototypicalization explanation solves these issues naturally. Unlike the extravagance explanation, which links change to speakers' desire for unusual linguistic actions, prototypicalization is rooted in and arises from cognitive reflexes to regular language use. It is regular use that ensures that speakers represent prototypical discourse profiles of constructions, leading to decreased productivity. Therefore, prototypicalization is not as demanding on speakers as extravagance. In itself, adhering to the community's linguistic norms triggers far-reaching language changes due to automatic cognitive processes. Moreover, prototypicalization predicts the specific contexts where moderate expressivity drives grammaticization—contexts of underprivileged communicative tasks. In these scenarios, while speakers' language use may seem extravagant due to linguistic innovation, the change may have actually arisen from the reduced productivity of older constructions. Lastly, by predicting grammaticization contexts, prototypicalization clarifies why innovative constructions become routinely used for certain tasks, allowing them to grammaticize.¹⁶

Therefore, prototypicalization can be viewed as merging repair and extravagance explanations. It vindicates repair explanations by motivating new constructions offsetting the decline of older ones. However, this erosion affects not the form of constructions but their functional scope and suitability for underprivileged communicative tasks. At the same time, prototypicalization is compatible with extravagance explanations since both are motivated by the force of expressivity. It is more general than extravagance as it reduces the threshold of expressivity driving speakers to innovate.

Prototypicalization is not restricted to possessive constructions, of course. As a case in point, we will briefly discuss the relevance of prototypicalization in the

¹⁶ This is supported by our finding that *kol* 'all/entirety' is the most common possessee in the predecessor of the analytic construction.

Jespersen Cycle (Jespersen 1917; Dahl 1979, *inter alia*). In this cycle, an emphatic negating construction grammaticizes as a bipartite general negation construction. The bipartite construction is then formally reduced to a single marker, allowing for another emphatic construction to emerge and grammaticize, and so on. Different explanations for the factors driving the cycle referred to either form (Jespersen 1917) or function (Kiparsky and Condoravdi 2006). We will not try to resolve this issue but wish to point out that prototypicalization is compatible as a potential, probably additional, driving force for the diachronic cycle. We rely on previous research that demonstrates that renewed emphatic constructions are first employed for underprivileged communicative tasks of negation.¹⁷

Characterizing the core functions of negation is a notoriously difficult task (see Beltrán et al. 2021 for a review). Giora et al. (2005) has found that default negation is weak (= less than X) rather than strong (= not X whatsoever). Assuming that weak negation is the prototypical discourse profile of negating constructions, we expect them to reduce to the prototype, hence motivating the emergence of novel, more marked forms for the underprivileged communicative tasks (strong negation).

Other studies on the function of negation in discourse argued that clausal negation is rarely used to deny information accessible to the interlocutors (Thompson 1998). We can then assume that negating non-accessible information is the privileged communicative task of negation, while negating accessible information is an underprivileged one. Now, corpus evidence of Old and Medieval French, Catalan, Italian, and Brazilian Portuguese shows that emphatic negators nearly always negate propositions that are accessible from the immediate context (Schwenter 2006; Hansen 2009). It is thus compatible with our hypothesis that novel constructions emerge in contexts of underprivileged communicative tasks. Furthermore, in a diachronic study of Old and Medieval French, Hansen (2009) found that as emphatic negation (*ne... pas/mie*) becomes more frequent, unmarked *ne* is used more frequently to negate non-accessible information. It seems that the Jespersen Cycle includes reduction to the prototype of the older construction.

In this chapter we argued that cyclic changes are motivated by competition between powerful omni-present forces in language use. For the recurrent renewal of possessive constructions, we have argued that in the trajectory of prototypicalization, cognitive processes repeatedly render general possessive constructions unfit for expressing underprivileged communicative tasks. But then, the force of expressivity motivates the evolution of an innovative means to perform these tasks. Once in place, the new construction is subject to the impact of prototypicality too, and the cycle begins anew.

¹⁷ See also Ariel and Mauri, this volume.

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6

The Continuative Cycle

Ljuba Veselinova and Anastasia Panova

6.1 Introduction

The cyclical character of language change is often discussed with respect to the historical development of negation, pronouns, copulas, and markers of future; see, for instance, [van Gelderen \(2009b, 2016b\)](#). In [Hansen \(2018a, 2020b\)](#) the notion of *cycle* has been extended to cases of lexical renewal driven by pragmaticalization, for instance recurring developments of temporal adverbs like *sooner* to preferential markers. The goal of this chapter is to put forward yet another example of a cyclical renewal, specifically the evolution of new continuative (STILL¹) expressions, which come to replace older ones. Drawing on three intra-genealogical studies, we show that the renewal of STILL expressions is in fact a regularly recurring process which we label the **Continuative Cycle (CC)**.

Probably the best-known case of the CC is the evolution of the English adverbs *yet* and *still*, which we use here as an introductory example (for details, see [König and Traugott 1982](#); [Lewis 2019](#)). In Old English, the adverb *git*, also spelled *giet*, *get*, and *gyt* (later developed into *yet*), was mainly used as a STILL marker (1). In combination with negation, it yielded the meaning NOT YET (2). The form *still*, in turn, had the meaning ‘without motion, quiet’ (3).

- (1) Old English, 950–1050 (Helsinki Corpus; Ælfric’s Lives of Saints)
*se wæs ða **git** hæðen, and eall westsexena land.*
‘who was still a heathen, as was all the West Saxon land’
- (2) Old English, 950–1050 (Helsinki Corpus; Wessex Gospels; John 2:4)
***Gyt** min tima **ne** com.*
‘My time has not yet come’
- (3) Old English, 950–1050 (Helsinki Corpus; Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies)
*swuster maria sæt **stille** æt drihtnes fotum.*
‘Sister Mary sat still at the Lord’s feet’

¹ In this chapter we use SMALL CAPS to refer to abstract categories. Examples from specific languages are rendered in *italics*.

In Middle English *yet* started to be used much more frequently with non-continuative meanings such as ‘even (more)’, ‘in addition’, and ‘nonetheless’. At the same time, *still* acquired new senses related to the continuative. Finally, in Modern English, *yet* has preserved its temporal semantics only in irrealis contexts, such as negation and questions (see (4)), whereas in the positive contexts it has been effectively replaced by *still*, as in (5).²

(4) *John is **not** in London **yet**.*

(5) *John is **still**/***yet** in London.*

Similar developments have been observed in studies of other Indo-European languages. For example, Santamaría Vaquer (2021: 28–29) points out that the Corsican adverb *ancu* ‘still, yet’ has apparently become a negative polarity item and was replaced by *sempri* ‘always’ in the positive domain. A slightly different, although very common, scenario is observed in Lithuanian: the verbal prefix *be-* preserved its continuative semantics only in the negative forms, while in the positive forms it has been reinforced by the prefix *te-*, originally a deictic element (Arkadijev 2011: 44–46; Ostrowski 2011: 207).

In Section 6.2, we discuss the renewal of continuative expressions in two Indo-European genera, North Germanic and Slavic. We explore corpus data to get a detailed description of the various encodings of *STILL* and assess their frequencies in specific languages. In addition, we also analyse diachronic data from Gothic and Old Church Slavonic.

In Section 6.3, we show that the CC is not limited to Indo-European but occurs in other language families as well. Specifically, we present evidence for the renewal of *STILL* expressions in Austronesian. The available diachronic and corpus data for Austronesian is quite limited, so in that section we apply a different method. We present cross-linguistic data on synchronic variation and then interpret it as evidence for language change; see ‘the dynamicization of synchronic typology’ (Croft 1991: 1, following Greenberg 1969, to mention some key works).

A summary of the main findings and a discussion in Section 6.4 conclude the chapter.

² During the last centuries *still* also acquired the meanings ‘even (more)’ and ‘nonetheless’ (König and Traugott 1982; Lewis 2019). This might suggest that *still* is gradually replacing *yet* in non-continuative functions as well; however, this part of the *still-yet* evolution is beyond the CC.

6.2 Two historical-comparative studies

6.2.1 Continuative expressions in Germanic languages

The polysemy and diachrony of continuative expressions in Germanic languages have been recently investigated by [Syrén \(2023\)](#). This section builds on [Syrén’s \(2023\)](#) findings, adding new insights. We pay special attention to the development of Germanic continuatives with respect to the CC and focus on North Germanic.

6.2.1.1 Comparative data on continuative expressions in Germanic languages
The comparative data from 12 Germanic languages are presented in [Table 6.1](#). Expressions for STILL are shown together with expressions for NOT YET (expressions for STILL NOT are not included).

Table 6.1 An overview of continuative adverbs in Germanic languages

	Language	STILL	NOT YET	collocator of STILL	source
North	Swedish	<i>än, ännu, fortfarande</i>	<i>inte än, inte ännu</i>	<i>nu</i> ‘now’	personal knowledge
	Danish	<i>endnu, stadig(væk), fremdeles</i>	<i>ikke endnu, endnu ikke</i>	<i>nu</i> ‘now’	Allan et al. 2000 ; Garde 2006 : 301, 353; Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen p.c.
	Norwegian (Bokmål)	<i>ennå, fremdeles</i>	<i>ikke ennå</i>	<i>nå</i> ‘now’	Holmes and Enger 2018 : 298; Haugen 1974 : 115, 143
	Icelandic	<i>enn, ennþá</i>	<i>ekki enn, ekki ennþá</i>	<i>þá</i> ‘then’	Pétur Helgason p.c.
	Faroese	<i>enn, enntá</i>	<i>ikki enn</i>	<i>tá</i> ‘then’	Lockwood 2002 : 55, 208; Young and Clewer 1985 : 104
West	English	<i>still</i>	<i>not yet</i>		personal knowledge
	Scots	<i>yet/yit, aye</i>	<i>no yet/yit</i>		Ross and Smith 2014 : 238; Purves 2002 : 59, 60, 75
	(West) Frisian	<i>noch, jit/yet(te)</i>	<i>noch net</i>		Sipma 1913 : 75, 150, 158; WFT; Buwalda et al. 1952 : 84, 202, 242
	(High) German	<i>noch, immer noch</i>	<i>noch nicht</i>	<i>immer</i> ‘always’	Clark and Thyen 1997 : 338, 401
	Dutch	<i>nog, nog altijd</i>	<i>nog niet</i>	<i>altijd</i> ‘always’	van Wely 1959 : 274, 334
East	Afrikaans	<i>nog</i>	<i>nog nie</i>		Kromhout 2006 : 284, 333
	Gothic	<i>nauh, nauh þan, nauh þanuh</i>	<i>nauh ni, nauh þanuh ni, ni nauh þanuh</i>	<i>þan</i> ‘then’ <i>uh</i> ‘and’	Lehmann 1986 : 264; Miller 2019 : in <i>passim</i>

In North Germanic languages, the comparative data from the modern languages suggest a common North Germanic stem reconstructed for Old Icelandic/Old Norse *enn* ‘still, yet’ (Zoëga 1910: 139) (in bold in Table 6.1). However, it should be kept in mind that this is only a partial account. The diachronic facts are further explicated and discussed in Section 6.2.1.3.

The forms that appear related to *enn* tend to collocate with elements such as ‘now’ or ‘then’, and in modern Danish and Norwegian they can no longer be used on their own. Besides, we observe the STILL expressions *fortfarande* in Swedish, *stadig(væk)* in Danish, and *fremdeles* in Norwegian, which do not originate from a common source and are clearly innovations. It should be noted that the diachronically younger expressions are not used for the encoding of the sense NOT YET. We can also see a geographic cline for the innovations since they have only developed in the languages of Mainland Scandinavia but not in the insular languages.

In West Germanic we find expressions cognate to or inherited from Old English *git* ‘still, yet’ (Bosworth 2014a)—English *yet*, Scots *yet/yit*, and Frisian *jit/yet(te)* (marked in Table 6.1 by dotted line). However, in English *yet* in the positive contexts was replaced by *still* (see Section 6.1); Frisian *jit/yet(te)* is now considered archaic (WFT). The Scots expression *yet/yit* is apparently more stable; however, it is worth mentioning that Scots also has an alternative STILL expression *aye* ‘always, still’ (Purves 2002: 75). Another STILL stem commonly used in West Germanic is *noch* or *nog* (underlined in Table 6.1). German *noch* and Dutch *nog* can be reinforced by adverbs meaning ‘always’.

In Gothic, the only language known to represent East Germanic, the encoding of STILL is done either by the simplex form *nauh*, cognate to the STILL expressions in Frisian, German, Dutch, and Afrikaans, or by composite expressions such as *nauhþan* or *nauhþanuh* which involve the temporal adverbial *þan* ‘then’ and the complex expression *þanuh* ‘then, now, then, and’. In this respect, the encoding of STILL in Gothic is similar to the Icelandic and Faroese expressions. Unlike modern Germanic languages where complex expressions of STILL are generally not used with negation, in Gothic both the simplex and the complex expressions are negated to yield the NOT YET sense.

6.2.1.2 Corpus studies on the uses of STILL expressions in Icelandic, Swedish, and Danish

This section presents the corpus studies of STILL expressions in Icelandic, Swedish, and Danish. The data for all three languages come from the Sketch Engine corpora collection. Each STILL expression was analysed based on a random sample of 200 sentences. In our annotation we used a semasiological approach: the continuative expressions were tagged for a specific use in all sentences of the sample. A list of all used tags together with brief comments and examples can be found in (6)–(12). Note that we distinguish the senses NOT YET and STILL NOT. Following the

analysis of *not yet* and *still not* in English by [van der Auwera \(1993: 625\)](#), we assume that STILL NOT obligatorily presupposes the speaker's counter-expectations, whereas in the case of NOT YET the semantics of counter-expectations is optional.

(6) **STILL**

Icelandic (isTenTen20)

Enn er veðrið svona agalega gott,
still is weather so very good,
samt ekki eins mikil sól og var í gær.
 but not as much sun and was yesterday

'The weather is still pretty good, but there is not as much sun as yesterday.'

(7) **NOT YET** (when combined with negation)

Danish (daTenTen20)

Multebærrene blomstrer ikke endnu.
 the.mulberries bloom **not yet**

'The mulberries are not blooming yet.'

(8) **STILL NOT** (when combined with negation)

Swedish (swTenTen14)

Men sambon trodde fortfarande inte på mig.
 but partner believed **still not** on me

'But my partner still didn't believe me.'

(9) **ADDITION** (includes repetition)

Danish (daTenTen20)

Derfor råder jeg denne romanist til at gå endnu
 therefore advise I this Romanist³ till to go **more**
 one year in school
et år i skole

'Therefore, I advise this Romanist to go to school for another year, [so he can learn].'

³ Specialist of Romance languages.

- (10) **INTENSIFIER** (with an adjective or adverb in the comparative degree)
Icelandic (isTenTen20)

Hjalla-stefnan þakkar traustið til að gera góðan
Hjall.GEN-board thanks trust till to make good

skóla enn betri.
school even better

‘The Hjall’s board thanks the trust for making a good school even better.’

- (11) **COMPARATIVE**
Swedish (swTenTen14)

Hon var ett par år yngre än jag
she was INDF couple year younger than I

‘She was a couple of years younger than me.’

- (12) **CONCESSIVE**
Danish (daTenTen20)

Men stadigvæk—hvilken skade kunne det gøre
But still what harm could it do

at offentliggøre lister over lukkede sider?
to make.public lists PREP closed pages

‘But still—what harm could it do to publish lists of closed sites?’

Table 6.2 presents a quantitative summary of the semantic analysis of Icelandic, Swedish, and Danish STILL expressions; see Syré (2023: 16–17) for similar results.

The data summarized in Table 6.2 demonstrate quite convincingly that the newer STILL expressions encode the sense STILL more frequently than the older ones. In Icelandic both *enn* and *ennþá* are predominantly used to encode the sense STILL; however, for the composite adverb *ennþá* the proportion of STILL uses is higher. In Swedish both *än* and *ännu* are barely used for the sense STILL; it is encoded by the younger expression *fortfarande*, derived from the verb *fortfara* ‘continue’, obsolete in modern Swedish; see Britse (2022: 20). In Danish, the word *end* ‘than’ apparently lost its STILL meaning and the word *endnu* is used in the STILL function only in 10 per cent of its occurrences. At the same time, continuative *stadig*, which also functions as an adjective ‘constant, settled’, and its variant *stadigvæk*, including the element *væk* ‘away’, express STILL in the vast majority of their occurrences in the sample. Another feature of the younger continuatives in Table 6.2 is that in the negative contexts they encode the STILL NOT rather than the NOT YET sense.

Table 6.2 Functions of STILL expressions in Icelandic, Swedish, and Danish

Tag	Icelandic		<i>än</i>	Swedish		<i>endnu</i>	Danish	
	<i>enn</i>	<i>ennþá</i>		<i>ännu</i>	<i>fortfarande</i>		<i>stadig</i>	<i>stadig-væk</i>
STILL	48%	66.5%	4%	7.3%	89.4%	10%	88.4%	93%
NOT YET	9.5%	18.5%	5%	13%	–	25.5%	1%	1%
STILL NOT	2.5%	4%	–	9.3%	8.1%	1.5%	4.5%	4%
ADDITION	18%	0.5%	2%	21.4%	–	29.5%	1%	–
INTENSIFIER	13.5%	10%	4.5%	49%	2%	33.5%	4%	0.5%
COMPARATIVE	3.5%	–	79%	–	–	–	–	–
CONCESSIVE	–	0.5%	–	–	–	–	–	1%
other uses	2.5% ‘yet to’, temporal ^a	–	5.5% particle	–	0.5% hedge	–	1% ‘constant’	–
Unclear	2.5%	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.5%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.9%	100%

^a This label is used to cover senses such as ‘before’, ‘so far’, and ‘until’.

As regards the functions not directly related to STILL, it is important to mention that the comparative use is observed only for the oldest expressions in Table 6.2, specifically for Icelandic *enn* and Swedish *än*. We discuss the relations between continuative and comparative uses of STILL expressions in Section 6.2.1.3.

To summarize, the corpus data from Icelandic, Swedish, and Danish together with the data from the descriptive literature presented in Table 6.2 (see the previous section) provide evidence for several instances of the renewal of STILL in the history of North Germanic languages. First, the Old Icelandic/Old Norse STILL expression *enn* has been combined in the daughter languages with the elements ‘now’ or ‘then’. It is not entirely clear whether we can assume reinforcement in this case, but collocation with expressions meaning ‘now’ and ‘then’ certainly could highlight the temporal semantics of the expression. Second, the development of the continuatives *fortfarande* in Swedish, *stadig(væk)* in Danish, and *fremdeles* in Norwegian is a clear example of the CC via replacement. We hypothesize that the development of the new STILL expression in this case was driven by the (over-)multifunctionality of the older STILL expressions. Third, one might suggest that the Danish expression *stadigvæk* derived from *stadig* is also a potential example of the CC. We leave the latter issue for future research.

6.2.1.3 Historical notes and hypotheses on the relations between continuative expressions and comparative markers

This section provides a commentary on the historical relations between continuative and comparative (‘than’) uses of the North Germanic STILL expressions, with special reference to Swedish *än*. Crosslinguistically, STILL expressions are commonly observed in comparative constructions, but they are normally used in the function of the degree marker (‘more’), as in the case of Turkish *daha* (Göksel and Kerslake 2005: 177), or as an intensifier (‘even’) of the parameter of comparison already modified by the degree marker (cf. *todavía más difícil* ‘even more difficult’ in Spanish).

Swedish *än*, Icelandic *enn*, and Faroese *enn*, apart from the intensifier function (‘even’), have another function in comparative constructions—they are extensively used as markers of the standard of comparison (‘than’). For example, in (13) Swedish *än* appears twice: in the first occurrence it is an intensifier; in the second occurrence it is the marker of the standard of comparison.

(13) Swedish (swTenTen14)

Men **än** viktigare **än** tid och pengar är
 but **even** more.important **than** time and money is
 din hälsa.
 your health

‘But your health is even more important than time and money.’

In Swedish dictionaries (Dalin 1850; Hellquist 1922), the comparative *än* is treated as a homonym to *än* ‘still, yet, more, even’. According to Hellquist (1922: 1214), the STILL expression *än* originates from Proto-Germanic **anþi* (**andī-*) ‘earlier’ (cf. Kroonen 2013: 27), whereas the comparative marker *än* is a cognate of Old English *þænne*, *þon(ne)* ‘then, when’ (cf. Bosworth 2014b) and Old High German *dann* (cf. German *denn* ‘since’).

At first glance, the development of the comparative particle ‘than’ from the temporal adverb ‘then’ might not seem well motivated. Yet, it had been suggested for some West Germanic languages (cf. Heine 1997: 118 with reference to Andersen 1983: 130 on English).

Hellquist (1922: 1214) and Wessén (1965 [1992]: 314) argue for the same development path, ‘then’ > ‘than’, in the history of Swedish *än*. Specifically, they suggest that the temporal adverbial ‘then’ has been extended into the domain of comparison via uses such as *My brother is older, then (come) I* (Swedish *Min bror är äldre, sedan [kommer] jag*).

It is difficult to determine the exact time when the comparative particle and the STILL expression became homonyms. We know that in Old Icelandic/Old Norse, they still had distinct forms: in Zoëga (1910: 19, 136) the comparative particle appears as *an* and *en*, while the STILL expression is cited as *enn*. In some of the modern languages they are distinct too (cf. *enn* ‘than’ vs. *ennā* ‘still’ in Norwegian (Haugen 1974: 115) and *end* ‘than’ vs. *endnu* ‘still’ in Danish (Garde 2006: 407)). Supposedly, somewhere between these two stages there was a moment when one and the same element functioned both as a comparative particle and as a STILL expression, and this ambiguity was one of the factors which triggered the renewal of STILL expressions by adding elements ‘now’ or ‘then’. If this hypothesis is correct, we can conclude that not only polysemy but also homonymy of the erstwhile STILL expressions can facilitate the CC.

6.2.2 Continuative expressions in Slavic languages

6.2.2.1 Comparative data on continuative expressions in Slavic languages

The comparative data collected from 16 Slavic languages are presented in Table 6.3. The material includes expressions for the sense STILL and for the sense NOT YET.

We observe a recurrent expression for the positive continuative meaning, which has slightly different variants in the analysed languages (in bold in Table 6.3). Some examples include Russian *eščē*, Bulgarian *ošte*, Serbian *jōš*, Czech *ještě*, Polish *jeszcze*, Sorbian *hišće*, and so on. These expressions go back to a common diachronic source, the Proto-Slavic **eščē* (Trubachev 1979: 32; Derksen 2008: 146). Reflexes of **eščē* combine with negation to render the sense NOT YET in the modern languages. Notably, in Old Church Slavonic NOT YET is encoded by the

Table 6.3 An overview of continuative adverbs in Slavic languages

	language	STILL	NOT YET ^a	collocator of STILL	source
East	Russian	<i>eščě,</i> <i>vsě eščě,</i> <i>poka, poka</i> <i>eščě</i>	<i>eščě ne,</i> <i>vsě eščě ne,</i> <i>poka ne</i>	<i>vsě</i> 'everything, still'	personal knowledge
	Belarusian	<i>jašče,</i> <i>usě jašče</i>	<i>jašče ne,</i> <i>usě jaščene</i>	<i>usě</i> 'all, every, everything'	Biryła and Šuba 1985: 106, 140, 202, 424
	Ukrainian	<i>šče, išče,</i> <i>vse šče</i>	<i>šče ne</i>	<i>vse</i> 'all, every, everything'	Bilodid 1980: 575
South	Bulgarian	<i>ošte,</i> <i>vse ošte</i>	<i>ošte ne,</i> <i>vse ošte ne</i>	<i>vse</i> 'all, always, every'	personal knowledge
	Macedonian	<i>ušte, sèušte</i>	<i>sèušte ne</i>	<i>sè</i> 'all, continually, all the time'	Daniela Mitovska p.c.
	Old Church Slavonic	<i>ješte</i>	<i>ne u,</i> <i>ješte ne</i>		Nandriš 1959: 211
	Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin	<i>jōš,</i> <i>jōš ūveēk</i>	<i>jōš ne</i>	<i>ūveēk</i> 'always'	Gudkov 1969: 69; Hammond 2005: 70
	Slovenian	<i>šè, šèvédno</i>	<i>šèní/ne</i>	<i>védno</i> 'always'	Herrity 2016: 59, 325
West	Czech	<i>ještě, stále,</i> <i>stále ještě</i>	<i>ještě ne</i>	<i>stále</i> 'always, still'	Naughton 2005: 60; RNC
	Slovak	<i>ešte,</i> <i>ešte stále</i>	<i>ešte ne-</i>	<i>stále</i> 'always, still'	Ružička 1966: 142, 262, in <i>passim</i>
	Polish	<i>jeszcze,</i> <i>wciąż,^b</i> <i>wciąż</i> <i>jeszcze</i>	<i>jeszcze nie</i>	<i>wciąż</i> 'still, all the time'	Bielec 1999: 191–192; RNC
	Kashubian	<i>ešče/ešči,</i> <i>ješ</i>	<i>ješ nie</i>		Sychta 1967: 275; 1968: 99
	Lower Sorbian, Upper Sorbian	<i>přeco hišće</i>	<i>přeco hišće</i> + NEG	<i>přeco</i> 'always'	Edward Werner p.c.

^a Negation in Slavic languages can be expressed by a negative particle or by a negative prefix. In Table 6.3, however, only one option is indicated for reasons of space.

^b The adverb *wciąż* has a synonym *ciagle*, which is more typical for colloquial Polish (Zdziebko 2019: 100).

phrase *ne u*; that is, a temporal adverb *u* 'already' is used. We return to this issue in Section 6.2.2.3.

In addition to identifying reflexes of **eščě*, we also observe a number of other variants for the encoding of the sense STILL in the modern languages. These are

clearly innovations. Many of them involve composite expressions where a reflex of **eščē* collocates with another semantically congruous word such as *vsě* ‘everything’ in Russian, *uveēk* ‘always’ in Serbian, *přeco* ‘always’ in the Sorbian varieties, *stále* ‘always, still’ in Slovak, or *wsiqż* ‘still, always’ in Polish. The composite expressions may have some sense of emphasis, but in most cases they appear to be stylistically equivalent to the one-word STILL expressions. Furthermore, the composite expressions may fuse into single-word expressions, as appears to be the case in Macedonian, where the periphrastic *se ušte* has been univerbated to *seušte* and thereby a new encoding for STILL has emerged.

It is also important to note the presence of completely new STILL expressions which compete with the reflexes of **eščē* in Russian, Czech, and Polish. The word *poka* in Modern Russian is polysemous: its oldest meanings are ‘while’ and ‘at that time’, and it started to develop the STILL sense in the 1810s (Sheshenina 2016). The Polish expression *wciqż* is a result of the apparently recent univerbation of *w* and *ciqż*. The expression *stále* in Czech and Slovak also has a verbal origin: according to Králik (2015: 552), the related adjective *stály* ‘constant, stable’, first documented in the 16th century, is originally a participle of the verb *stát* ‘stand’.

6.2.2.2 Corpus studies on the uses of STILL expressions in Russian, Bulgarian, and Polish

This section presents corpus studies of STILL expressions in Russian, Bulgarian, and Polish.

The Russian data come from the Russian National Corpora (RNC), the Bulgarian data come from the Bulgarian National Corpus (BulNC), and the Polish data come from the parallel Polish-Russian corpus, a part of the Russian National Corpora (RNC, Pol-Rus parallel). As in the Germanic study, we performed string searches for basic STILL expressions in each of these corpora and extracted random samples of 200 sentences for each STILL expression under study. The only exception was the expression *wciqż jeszcze*, for which the sample consisted of 78 sentences because no more occurrences were found in the corpus. The system of tags used in the Germanic study was adjusted to account for the Slavic data ((14)–(19)). Specifically, we excluded the tags CONCESSIVE and COMPARATIVE because these meanings are not attested in the languages analysed, and we added the new tag ALREADY.

(14) STILL

Polish (RNC, Pol-Rus parallel)

Janka była w gimnazjum jeszcze

Yanka be.PST.F.SG in middle.school still

‘Yanka was still in middle school’

- (15)
- NOT YET**
- (when combined with negation)

Russian (RNC)

Solnče eščě ne podnjalos' nad kryšej saraja
 sun still not raise.PST.N.SG over roof.INS barn.GEN

'The sun has not yet risen over the roof of the barn.'

- (16)
- STILL NOT**
- (when combined with negation)

Russian (RNC)

nesmotrja na xvastovstvo, vsě eščě nikuda ne uexala
 despite on boasting all still nowhere NEG go.PST.F.SG

'despite boasting, [she] still hasn't gone anywhere'

- (17)
- ADDITION**
- (includes repetition)

Bulgarian (BulNC)

eto ošte edin ekzempljar
 here more one.M copy

'here is one more copy'

- (18)
- ALREADY**
- (the meaning 'as early as'/'at a time as far removed as' usually appears when the STILL expression modifies a temporal phrase indicating a specific period or point in time)
- ⁴

Bulgarian (BulNC)

iskah da ti go saobštja ošte
 want.AOR.1SG COMP you.DAT it.ACC tell.PRS.1SG already

minalata godina
 last.DEF.F.SG year

'I wanted to tell you this already last year'

- (19)
- INTENSIFIER**
- (with an adjective or adverb in the comparative degree)

Polish (RNC, Pol-Rus parallel)

ścisnął mnie za rękę jeszcze mocniej
 squeeze.PST.M.SG I.ACC by hand.ACC even strong.COMP

'[he] squeezed my hand even tighter'

The results of the annotation are shown in Table 6.4.

In all three languages shown in Table 6.4, reflexes of *eščě, when used on their own, most often indicate ADDITION. The functions STILL and NOT YET are quite

⁴ We use the tag ALREADY for this meaning, as that is how it is usually indicated in the dictionaries of Slavic languages; see also Mustajoki (1988: 110–125) and Boguslavsky (1996: 237–247) on the semantics of STILL and ALREADY when they modify noun phrases in Russian.

Table 6.4 Functions of STILL expressions in Russian, Bulgarian, and Polish

Tag	Russian			Bulgarian		Polish		
	<i>eščě</i>	<i>vsě eščě</i>	<i>poka</i>	<i>ošte</i>	<i>vse ošte</i>	<i>jeszcze</i>	<i>wciąż jeszcze</i>	<i>wciąż</i>
STILL	13.5%	83%	9.5%	9.5%	56.5%	19.5%	97.4%	49%
NOT YET	14.5%	–	14%	4.5%	26.5%	17.5%	–	–
STILL NOT	1%	17%	–	1%	17%	–	2.6%	4%
ADDITION	41.5%	–	–	51%	–	32%	–	2%
ALREADY	8.5%	–	–	23%	–	3.5%	–	–
INTENSIFIER	12%	–	–	10.5%	–	13.5%	–	–
other uses	4.5% particle, 2.5% with <i>vsě</i>	–	76% ‘while’, etc.	–	–	8% particle, 0.5% with <i>wciąż</i>	–	26% ‘all the time’, 10% with <i>jeszcze</i>
Unclear	2% 100%	– 100%	0.5% 100%	0.5% 100%	– 100%	5.5% 100%	– 100%	9% 100%

frequent but not much more frequent than the function of intensification in comparative constructions. Note also that, in contrast to *yet* in English, the reflexes of **ešče* are used in STILL and NOT YET functions equally often. Finally, Bulgarian *ošte* stands out in that it very frequently appears in the sense ALREADY. The high prevalence of this function seems to be a feature of Macedonian *ušte* too; moreover, according to Lunt (1952: 281), ALREADY is the only meaning of *ušte*.

The main function of the composite expressions *vsě eščě*, *vse ošte*, and *wciqż jeszcze* is obviously STILL. In addition, they can occur in the STILL NOT and NOT YET senses; however, in contrast to the reflexes of **ešče*, in the positive continuative uses composite expressions are much more frequent than in the negative ones. Another remarkable difference between the reflexes of **ešče* and composite expressions is that in the negative contexts, the reflexes of **ešče* tend to occur in the sense NOT YET, whereas composite expressions usually express more emphatic, counter-expectational STILL NOT.

As for *poka* in Russian and *wciqż* in Polish, their range of functions is clearly different from that of the reflexes of **ešče*, although for *wciqż* the proportion of STILL uses is relatively high.

To conclude, we propose that the high multifunctionality of reflexes of **ešče* was one of the main factors that triggered the development of new STILL expressions. Some of the new STILL expressions, for example *poka*, were derived via extension of their original semantics. Others, for example *vsě eščě* and *vse ošte*, were derived via reinforcement of the old STILL expressions. The expression *wciqż jeszcze* clearly demonstrates the combination of these two mechanisms: the old STILL expression is reinforced by the element that can mean STILL on its own.

6.2.2.3 Innovation in the domain of negation: data from Old Church Slavonic

As shown in Table 6.4, the meaning NOT YET in Old Church Slavonic can be expressed in two ways, by the expression *ne u* ‘not already’ and by the expression *ješte ne* ‘still not, not yet’.⁵ This kind of variation in the encoding of NOT YET is crosslinguistically rare, although in theoretical models (e.g. Löbner 1989; see also van Baar 1997: 21), it is pointed out that NOT YET expressions tend to involve negation of either STILL or ALREADY. The resulting reading will depend on the scope of negation; that is, NOT YET = NOT (ALREADY) = STILL (NOT). However, it has to be pointed out that crosslinguistically, it is much more common to encode NOT YET by negating STILL rather than by negating ALREADY. That said, the facts from Old Church Slavonic become all the more interesting in that we observe a typologically rather infrequent coexistence of negation with either STILL or ALREADY used

⁵ The words *u* and *ješte* are also used as particles; however, the particle uses are not discussed in this section.

to encode NOT YET. As we shall see, this variation was eliminated in the course of time and the typologically more common alternative (i.e. NOT YET = STILL (NOT)) was chosen. This illustrates how a STILL expression may acquire more domains of use and that innovation may arise in the domain of negation.

6.2.2.3.1 Uses of *ješte* in Old Church Slavonic

In the dictionary of Old Church Slavonic (*Slovník jazyka staroslověnského*, SJS) the entry for *ješte* shows four generalized adverbial meanings: ‘still, so far; not yet (with negation); once again’, ‘already; not anymore (with negation)’, ‘else, more, also, still’, and ‘still, only’; only the STILL meaning of *ješte* is shown here (20).⁶

(20) Old Church Slavonic; Mar, John 11:30 [STILL]

нѣ	бѣ	на	мѣстѣ	еще	идеже	сърѣте	и	марѣта
<i>ně</i>	<i>bě</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>městě</i>	ešte	<i>ideže</i>	<i>sřrete</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>marěta</i>
CONJ	be.IMPERFECT.3SG	PREP	place.LOC.SG.N	still	where.REL.ADV	meet.AOR.ACT.3SG	3SG.ACC.M	Martha

‘[Now Jesus had not yet come into the village], but was still in the place where Martha had met him.’

In negative contexts *ješte* can encode both NOT YET (STILL NOT) and NO LONGER. The reading is determined by the position of the negation marker, as in (21)–(22).

(21) Old Church Slavonic; Mar, Luke 24:41 [STILL NOT]

еще	же	не	вѣроуѣштемъ	имъ	отъ	радости	и	чюдѣштемъ	сѧ.
ešte	<i>že</i>	ne	<i>věrujštemъ</i>	<i>imъ</i>	<i>otъ</i>	<i>radosti</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>čjuděštemъ</i>	<i>sę.</i>
still	PTCL	NEG	believe.PTCP.PRS.ACT.DAT.PL.M.STRONG		PREP	joy.GEN.SG.F	CONJ	marvel.PTCP.PRS.ACT.DAT.PL.M.STRONG	

3PL.DAT.M

‘But while they still did not believe for joy, and marvelled,
[He said to them, “Have you any food here?”]’

⁶ The translation of examples provided in this section has several sources. In examples (20), (21), and (23), the idiomatic translation is from the English Standard Version or the King James Bible. In examples (22) and (24), translations are provided by Antoaneta Andonova Granberg.

(22) Old Church Slavonic; Supr 376, 17 [NO LONGER]

нѣ сѣде не ꙗше дѣлателѣ и виноградъ нѣ вы есте дѣлателѣ
ne sьde ne jeste dělateľe i vinograd'
 CONJ ADV NEG still worker.PL.M.NOM CONJ vineyard.SG.M.NOM
 нѣ вы есте дѣлателѣ
ne vy есте dělateľe
 CONJ you.PL.NOM be.IPFV.PRS.2PL worker.PL.M.NOM
 'Here however, [there are] not workers and vineyard anymore—you are
 [all] workers.'

6.2.2.3.2 Uses of *u* in Old Church Slavonic

According to the Old Church Slavonic dictionary (SJS), the adverb *u* (*oy* in Cyrillic, also sometimes spelled *ю*) means 'already' in positive contexts. The adverb *u* is seldom used on its own. It usually collocates with various clitics, *že* being among the common ones. Thus for the encoding of the 'already' sense, it is typically found in a univerbated form *uže* (*оуже*). When combined with negation, *u* encodes senses such as 'no more' or 'not yet' ((23)–(24)). Just like in the case of *jeste*, NOT YET and NO LONGER uses are differentiated by the position of the negative particle.

(23) Old Church Slavonic; Mar, John 11:30 [NOT YET]

не бѣ же не оу иѣс прешель въ весь
ne bě že ne u [Jesus]
 NEG be.IMPERFECT.3sg PTCL NEG yet [Jesus]
prešelъ въ vesъ
 arrive.PTCP.RES.ACT.NOM.SG.M.STRONG PREP village.ACC.SG.F
 'Now Jesus had not yet come into the village,' [but was still in the place
 where Martha had met him.]

(24) Old Church Slavonic; (1 Sam 15:23) Cloz 3a3 [NO LONGER]

і оукоритъ тѣ г<осподъ> оу не бѣти въ владѣхъ
i ukoritъ tѣ g<ospodъ>
 CONJ reject.PFV.PST.3SG.ACT you.SG.ACC lord.M.SG.NOM
u ne byti въ vladykѣ
 already NEG be.INF PREP ruler.M.SG.ACC
 'And the Lord hath also rejected thee from being king.'

In pertinent sources on Old Church Slavonic, *u* is described as a word strongly associated with contexts of negation; that is, it is very close to being a negative polarity item (see entry in SJS,⁷ Nandriš 1959: 211, Antoaneta Andonova Granberg, and Tatjana Slavova p.c.).

⁷ *oy*², *ю* adv. and part, <http://gorazd.org/gulliver/?recordId=35502>.

6.2.2.3.3 *Diachronic perspective*

The data presented in the two previous sections show that the adverbs *ješte* and *u* were often used in the same functions. Their competition is especially clear in the negative domain, where both of them could encode NOT YET and NO LONGER. The exact division of labour between *ješte* and *u* requires a separate investigation. However, what is clear from the available sources is that the adverb *u* was strongly associated with the sense NOT YET.

The system of Old Church Slavonic adverbs used to encode all four phasal polarity values is presented in Table 6.5 together with the parallel data from some modern Slavic languages. The synchronic patterns in the adverbial encoding of phasal meanings are quite similar within East, West, and South branches, so in Table 6.5 the data from modern Slavic languages are limited to Russian (East Slavic), Polish (West Slavic), and Bulgarian (South Slavic). A table with phasal polarity expressions from all modern Slavic languages is provided on Zenodo (see the link in the References). The adverbs placed in brackets represent the less common strategies for the expression of the corresponding senses and are often possible only in very specific constructions.

Table 6.5 Phasal adverbs in Old Church Slavonic and in three modern Slavic languages representing the three branches of the family

	ALREADY	STILL	NOT YET	NO LONGER	Source
Old Church Slavonic	<i>u, uže, (ješte)</i>	<i>ješte</i>	<i>ne u, ne uže, (ješte ne)</i>	<i>u ne, uže ne, ne ješte</i>	cf. discussion above
Bulgarian	<i>veče, (ošte)</i>	<i>ošte, vse ošte</i>	<i>ošte ne, vse ošte ne</i>	<i>veče ne, poveče ne</i>	personal knowledge
Russian	<i>uže, (eščě)</i>	<i>eščě, vsě eščě, (poka, poka eščě)</i>	<i>eščě ne, vsě eščě ne, (poka ne)</i>	<i>uže ne, bol'se ne</i>	personal knowledge
Polish	<i>już, (jeszcze)</i>	<i>jeszcze, wciąż, wciąż jeszcze</i>	<i>jeszcze nie</i>	<i>już nie</i>	WSJP PAN

The comparative data in Table 6.5 indicate a significant change in the encoding of the sense NOT YET. Apparently, the phrase *ne u* (or *ne uže*) used in Old Church Slavonic to express NOT YET was displaced in Bulgarian by *ošte ne*, a reflex of Old Church Slavonic *ješte ne*. The Russian and Polish data confirm that in modern Slavic the ALREADY adverbs are no longer involved in the encoding of NOT YET. Instead, all modern Slavic NOT YET expressions are based on the cognates of the Old Church Slavonic STILL adverb *ješte*.

To sum up, the analysis presented above suggests that in the history of Slavic languages the ALREADY adverb *u* (*uže*), which used to encode the sense NOT YET, was first displaced from the NOT YET function by the STILL-based expression, and second, in East and West Slavic *uže* became the dominant expression for the

encoding of the sense NO LONGER. As already stated above, we can say that the Slavic system, which earlier allowed variation, gradually shifted to the option that is crosslinguistically more common.

6.3 Evidence for the CC from Austronesian

In this section we discuss data from a geographically and genealogically stratified sample of 96 Austronesian languages. All main branches of the phylum as outlined in the Ethnologue are included in the sample. We represent 89 different genera; see also [Figure 6.1](#) and a listing of the sampled languages published on Zenodo (see the link in the References). It should be noted that the Polynesian family is represented only by Samoic-Outliers. We have not been able to locate information on expressions of phasal polarity in the descriptions of East Nuclear Polynesian languages that we consulted.

The collected data are robust enough to allow for several generalizations as regards the renewal of continuative expressions. Specifically, the Austronesian data demonstrate quite convincingly that the CC has been in operation throughout the history of the family and remains current in the modern languages as well. We observe renewals of continuative expressions by several different pathways: (i) replacement of older continuative expressions by new ones; (ii) reinforcement of erstwhile continuative expression by lexical items with suitable semantics; (iii) variation/synonymy that is demonstrably established. Some languages show combinations of these strategies.

As regards the diachronic information on the encoding of the continuative in Austronesian languages, [Blust and Trussel \(2010\)](#) reconstruct **pa* as an encoding of continuity and related senses in Proto-Austronesian. In addition, members of another cognate set **Na* are listed with senses such as ‘now, already, still, yet, then’. The work with the stratified sample involved the procedure presented in (25):

(25) Comparative work with the Austronesian sample:

- (i) Identify expressions that encode senses pertinent to the continuative function.
- (ii) Among these, identify languages where cognates of Proto-Austronesian **pa* and **Na* can be postulated with a fair amount of confidence, and conversely, languages without such cognates. Create subsets that reflect this division.
- (iii) Identify forms that might be diachronically related for the subset where the continuative function is encoded by expression(s) distinct from **pa* and **Na*.
- (iv) Posit an operation of the CC for the languages where more than one expression for the continuative function is observed.

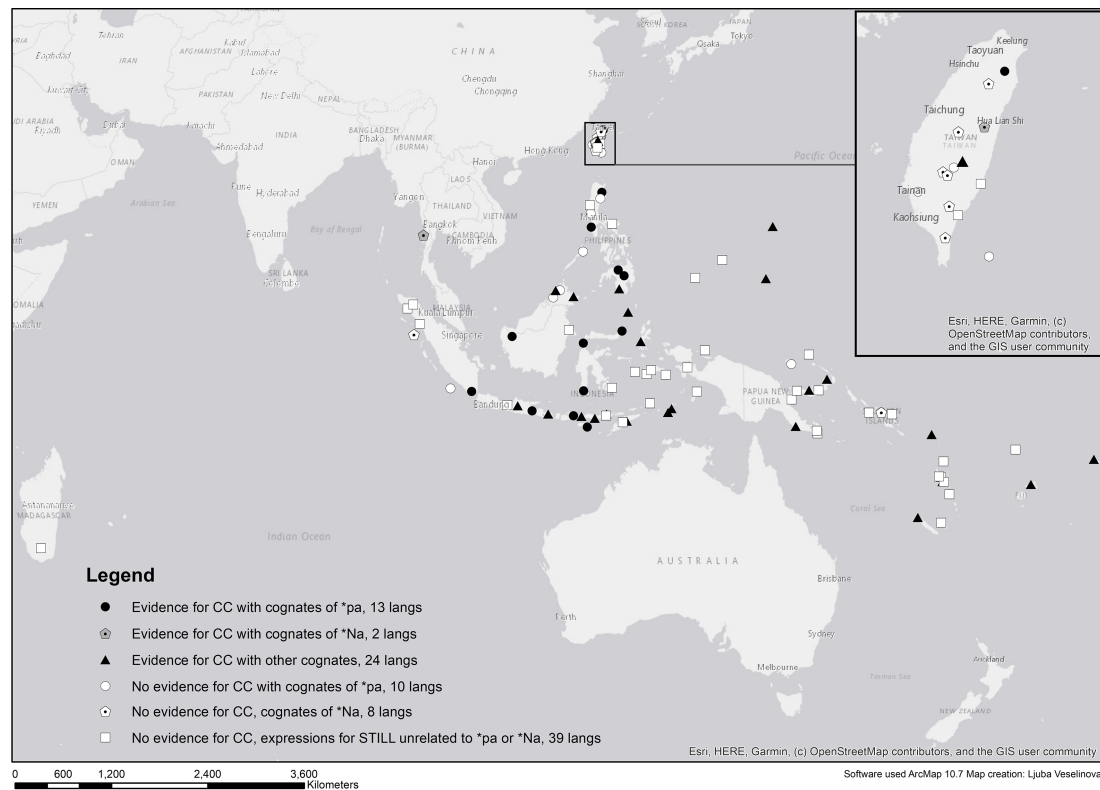


Figure 6.1 Austronesian languages: classification of the stratified sample reflecting the occurrence of CC with various cognates

Applying the steps in (25), we were able to divide the sample into languages with reflexes of **pa*, languages with reflexes of **Na*, and finally languages with no reflexes of either of them; see the quantitative summary in [Table 6.6](#).

Table 6.6 Quantitative estimate of the continuative expressions in the Austronesian sample and their relation to identifiable cognate sets as well as to the CC

Reconstructed expression	Evidence for the CC	No evidence for the CC	Sum of the counts in the rows
<i>*pa</i>	13	10	23
<i>*Na</i>	2	8	10
other	24	39	63
Sum of the counts in the columns	39	57	96

In [Section 6.3.1](#) we discuss the CC with cognates **pa*, in [Section 6.3.2](#) we proceed with CC with cognates of **Na*, and in [Section 6.3.3](#) we focus on the CC with STILL expressions not related to either **pa* or **Na*.

6.3.1 Discussion of the CC with cognates of **pa*

[Blust and Trussel \(2010\)](#) list reflexes of **pa* in 24 Austronesian languages; see [Figure 6.2](#). This dataset presents a partial coverage of the phylum. It includes a couple of East Formosan languages and a number of Western Malayo-Polynesian languages, primarily from the Philippines, together with some Sulawesi and one Sabahan language, Central Dusun, spoken in Northern Borneo. We checked the descriptions of these languages for the encoding of the continuative functions, as well as for the uses of the expression *pa*. It turns out that *pa* has been retained as the sole expression of STILL in 15 languages of this dataset. Conversely, in nine languages from the list provided by [Blust and Trussel \(2010\)](#), new expressions for STILL have emerged. For instance, in Binukid, [Post \(1992: xx, 62, 75, 92, 106\)](#) lists *pa* ‘still, yet, up to now, up to a specific point in time’ and *gihapun* ‘still, as before, nevertheless, still be the same thing’. Among them, *gihapun* is arguably the newer one to encode STILL. Unlike *pa*, *gihapun* is not observed with negation; thus it can be described as contextually more restricted than *pa*. It should be noted that reflections of **pa* are not encountered in Eastern Malayo-Polynesian languages. In fact, Isabelle Brill (p.c.) reports that there does not seem to be any evidence of **pa* as an expression of continuity in modern Oceanic languages either.

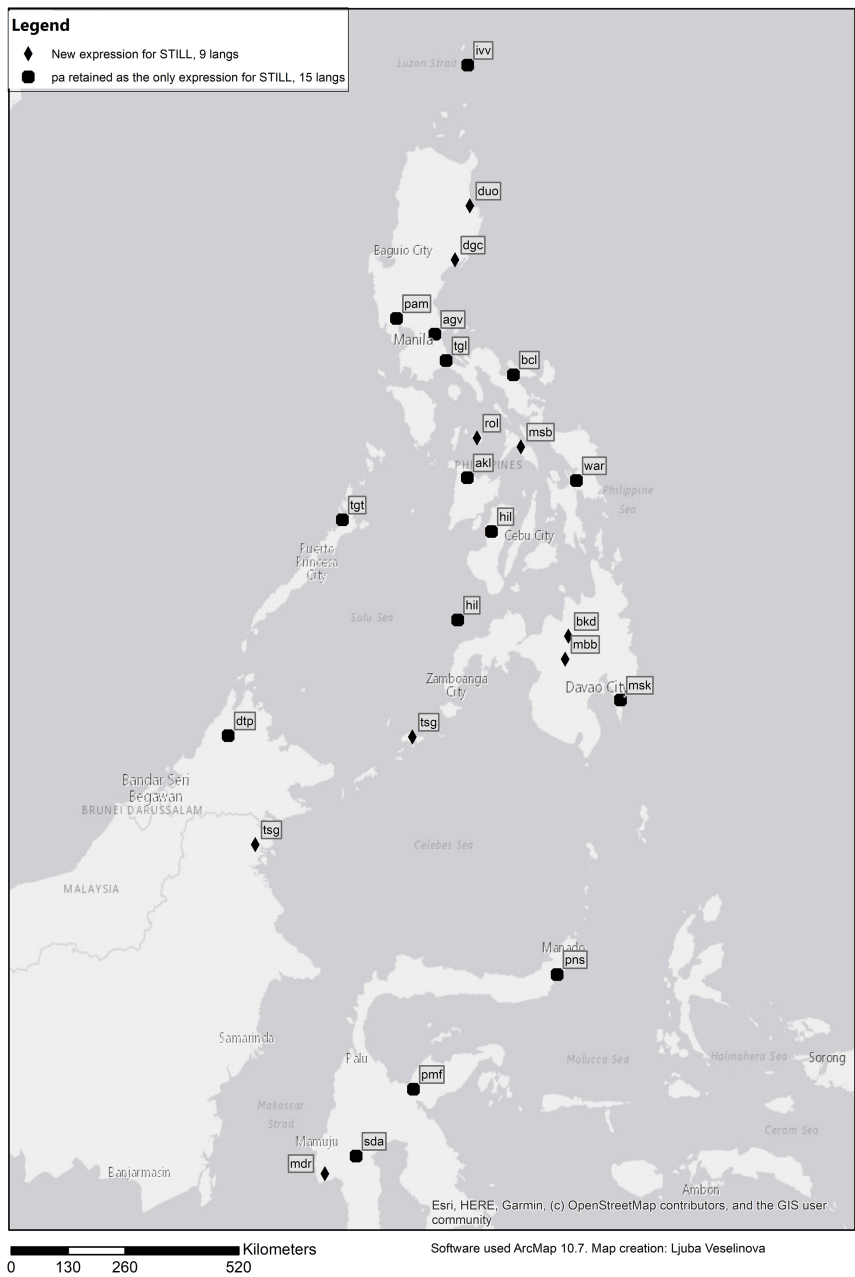


Figure 6.2 Data from the Austronesian Comparative Dictionary (Blust & Trussel 2010). ISO codes are used for labeling of specific languages

In our own sample there are 23 languages with expressions demonstrably related to **pa* that encode the continuative meaning; see [Figure 6.1](#). The replacement of **pa* is illustrated below by data from Makasar and Pendau, which belong to two distinct genera spoken on the Sulawesi Islands. Makasar belongs to the South Sulawesi genus Lemolang, while Pendau belongs to the Celebic family spoken in Northern Sulawesi. In both of these languages, we observe several possibilities for the encoding of positive continuity shown in [Table 6.7](#).

Table 6.7 Continuative expressions in Makasar and Pendau

Makasar	<i>i(n)ja, i(n)ja=pa, =pa</i>
Pendau	<i>mono, mono=po</i>

The clitics *=pa* in Makasar and *=po* in Pendau are clearly cognates of the Proto-Austronesian continuative expression **pa* ‘still, yet, till now/first/before’ ([Blust and Trussel 2010](#)). It is noteworthy that these clitics combine directly with expressions of negation for the encoding of the NOT YET sense as shown in (26) and (27).

(26) Makasar ([Jukes 2020](#): 309)

tena=pa ku=golla-i kopi≡a
NEG=IPF 1=sugar-TRS coffee≡DEF
 ‘I haven’t sugared the coffee yet’

(27) Pendau ([Quick 2007](#): 407; glosses adapted)

io ndau=po N-po₁-rapi
 3SG/GEN **NEG=CONT** RE-SF/DE-spouse
 ‘He was not yet married.’

However, for the encoding of the positive continuative meaning, *=pa* and *=po* tend to be reinforced by another word—*i(n)ja* in Makasar (28) and *mono* in Pendau (29). The fact that the words accompanying *=pa/=po* in Makasar and Pendau are different lexical items indicates that the process of the STILL reinforcement has started after the divergence of Makasar and Pendau from their common ancestor.

(28) Makasar ([Jukes 2020](#): 141)

tallas=a’ ija=pa=i anrong mangge≡ku
 alive=EC **still=IPF=3** mother father≡1.POSS
 ‘my parents are still alive’

(29) Pendau (Quick 2007: 279)

'ami **mono=po** *n-pe-guru*
 1PL.EXC/AB **still=CONT** RE-SF/DY-learn
 'We were still learning.'

The words *i(n)ja* and *mono* are described as adverbs and they can express the positive continuative meaning on their own, without *=pa/=po*; see (30)–(31).

(30) Makasar (Jukes 2020: 350)

aN(N)-apa *nu=amm-antang* **inja** *na=bangngi=mo*
 BV-why 2F=MV-stay **still** 3=night=PFV
 'Why are you still here? It's already night.'

(31) Pendau (Quick 2007: 466)

saba' *jimo* **mono** *bura-bura* *N-po1-dua'=mo*
 because 3PL/AB **still** RED-speak RE-SF/FA-arrive=COMP
si=Rante *Salaka*
 PN/AB=R.
 'Because they were still speaking when Rante Salaka arrived.'

That *=pa* and *=po* are more grammaticalized elements than *i(n)ja* and *mono* is also evidenced by their status as clitics, and by the fact that they show a wider range of uses beyond the continuative. For instance, in Pendau, *=po* is also used to encode sequentiality or repetition, as in (32a). When combined with numeral phrases, *=po* indicates larger quantity or addition, as in (32b). Finally, when used in a comparative construction, *=po* expresses intensification; see (32c).

(32) Pendau

- a. *N-pe-bura=po* *siopu* *nu=aniong* *'uo*
 RE-SF/DY-speak=**CONT** owner CN/GEN=rice yonder
 'The rice owner spoke again: <...>' (Quick 2007: 403)
- b. *Ruo* *kampung=po* *ni-dua'* *mami.*
 Two village=**CONT** IV/RE-arrive 1PL.EXC/GEN
 'We arrived after (we passed) two more villages.' (Quick 2007: 410)
- c. *buku* *moo* *no-oge=po* *paey* *buku* *'uo*
 book this ST/RE-big=**CONT** and.then book yonder
 'This book is much bigger than that book.' (Quick 2007: 412)

The synchronic data from Makasar and Pendau show evidence for both reinforcement and replacement scenarios of the CC. Similarly to the data discussed for the Indo-European languages, the older continuative expressions in both Makasar and in Pendau are highly multifunctional.

6.3.2 Discussion of the CC with cognates of **Na*

Blust and Trussel (2010) suggest ‘already’ as the oldest sense of **Na*. Since our focus is on renewal of continuative expressions, with cognates of **Na*, we focused only on the languages where these expressions are used to encode the continuative function, and we examine their renewal in modern times. As shown in Table 6.6, the languages where a relation to **Na* can be convincingly posited amount to 10 in the current sample. They show a clear areal concentration in Taiwan, where they are observed in several distinct genera such as Atayalic, Tsou, and Paiwan. Cognates of **Na* are observed outside of Taiwan as well; however, the concentration there is noteworthy. Among the languages where cognate of **Na* are observed as encoding STILL, there are only two languages where the CC is observed: Moken, a Western Malayo-Polynesian language from the Moklen group, and Seediq. For instance, in Seediq, Holmer (1996: 47) describes the particle *na* as an expression of continuity, which in the affirmative occurs with future verbs to indicate a situation that is still as it was before. This author also comments (1996: 47) that the particle *na* ‘is normally used with negated verbs in the past tense meaning “not yet”’. In a later description, Tsukida (2005: 311) lists both *na* and *niyana* as expressions for STILL, but only the latter form is observed in the examples she provides. Thus it seems plausible that the older expression has been ousted by the newer one. It is also significant that while the older expression *na* is described as particle in Holmer (1996) and appears consistently in clause final position ((33a–b)), as is characteristic for particles in Seediq (see Tsukida 2005: 311 and *passim*), the newer expression *niyana* is described as belonging to the class of adverbs and shows more flexibility as regards its position in the sentence; see (33d–e).

(33) Seediq

- a. *Ini ku ekan ido na.*
 NEG 1.SG.NOM eat.AF.IMP rice **IPFV.PRT**

‘I haven’t eaten rice yet.’ (Holmer 1996: 47)

- b. *Meekan ku damac na.*
 eat.AF.FUT 1SG.NOM food **IPFV.PRT**

‘I will still eat some more food (so don’t remove it yet!).’

(Holmer 1996: 47)

- c. *gaga m-ahu lukus ka masaw niyana 'u.*
 DIST.PROG AV-wash clothes NOM Masaw **still** EMPH
 'Masaw is still washing clothes.' (Tsukida 2005: 298)
- d. *'ini bahu lukus ka baki niyana.*
 NEG AV.NFIN.wash clothes NOM old.man **still**
 'The old man has not washed the clothes yet.' (Tsukida 2005: 311)
- e. *'ini bahu lukus niyana ka baki.*
 NEG AV.NFIN.wash clothes **still** NOM old.man
 'The old man has not washed the clothes yet.' (Tsukida 2005: 311)

6.3.3 Discussion of the CC with expressions not related to either **pa* or **Na*

As demonstrated by the counts in Table 6.6, as well as in Figure 6.1, in about one-third of the languages in the Austronesian sample, at least some of the STILL expressions can be traced back to reconstructed forms such as Proto-Austronesian **pa* 'still, yet' or **Na* 'already'. However, in more than 60 per cent of the languages in the Austronesian sample, we observe expressions for STILL that have no viable connection to the reconstructed forms; for reference purposes we label them the group of *Newer STILL*. The group of newer STILL is briefly illustrated by data from a geographically contiguous cluster of Western Oceanic languages spoken in Northern New Guinea and New Ireland; see Table 6.8.

As shown in Table 6.8, not only are the expressions listed in Table 6.8 distinct from the reconstructed ones in Proto-Austronesian, but they are also markedly different from each other. This suggests that they are most probably innovations rather than inherited expressions. Among languages in Table 6.8, only Kove shows indications for the operation of the CC. The relevant data are presented in (34) below.

(34) Kove

- a. *Kekele diene i-tangi-tangi ghamaitune.*
 child DEM 3SG.SBJ-cry-RED **IPFV**
 'This child is still crying.' (Sato 2013: 336)
- b. *Kekele diene i-tangi ghapoya.*
 child DEM 3SG.SBJ-cry **IPFV**
 'This child is still crying (but almost finish[ed]⁸ crying).'
 (Sato 2013: 336)

⁸ Our addition. There is obviously a typo in the source which reads 'almost finish crying.'

- c. *Annie i-ani haninga maitune.*
 Annie 3SG.SBJ-eat food NEG
 ‘Annie has not eaten yet.’ (Sato 2013: 347)

Table 6.8 Examples of newer STILL expressions

Language name	Genealogical information	Encoding of STILL	Source
Bugawac	[...] ^a Western Oceanic, North New Guinea, Huon Gulf, North	serialized verb construction that involves ‘be/POSITION’ verb	Eckermann 2007: 61
Kove	[...] Western Oceanic, North New Guinea, Ngero-Vitiaz, Ngero, Bariai	<i>ghamaitune</i> , <i>ghapoya</i>	Sato 2013: 226, 336–337, 347
Mbula	[...] Western Oceanic, North New Guinea, Ngero-Vitiaz, Vitiaz, Mangap-Mbula	<i>men</i>	Bugenhagen 1995: 134–135
Nakanai	[...] Western Oceanic, Meso Melanesian, Willaumez	<i>so(la)</i>	Johnston 1980: 60–61
Nalik	[...] Western Oceanic, Meso Melanesian, New Ireland, Lavongai-Nalik	<i>nanga</i>	Volker 1998: 143–144

^a To save space, the initial steps of the genealogical path are not listed for each language. They are ‘Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern, Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, Oceanic’. They are identical for all languages listed in Table 6.8.

As shown in (34), in Kove there are two expressions that encode a continuing situation, *ghamaitune* and *ghapoya*. Sato (2013: 226) states that *ghamaitune* means ‘still’ and occurs only with reduplicated verbs, while *ghapoya* has a more specific sense in that it indicates that ‘the action is almost finishing (but not finished yet)’; it does not occur with reduplicated verbs. Both expressions clearly contain the element *gha*. It is a multifunctional morpheme, with one of its frequent functions being linking between two verbs or two clauses to indicate a single event.⁹ Sato (2013: 336–337) points out that the forms *ghamaitune* and *ghapoya* are stable univerbations and are best considered single lexical items. Further motivation for this is that *poya* does not occur as a simplex form, without *gha*. Thus we can say that, in fact, there are two constructions used to encode positive continuity:

⁹ Sato (2013: *passim*) maintains that the element *gha* has different functions when used with nouns and when used with verbs.

one that involves a reduplicated verb plus *ghamaitune* and another that involves a simplex verb modified/combining with *ghapoya*. The two constructions differ semantically in that the first one has a more general sense, while the second one is more specific/narrower.

The distribution of *ghamaitune* and the bare form *maitune* is interesting. Sato (2013: 337) points out that *maitune* is used with non-reduplicated verbs and encodes the NOT YET sense, as shown in (34c) above, without special negation marking. This suggests that one and the same expression may have been used with both senses, STILL and NOT YET. This phenomenon has been described for a number of other languages; see the data from Lamaholot discussed by Veselinova, Asplund, and Vanderklok (2024: 892–893) and Veselinova and Devos (2021) (see also Persohn 2024). In this language, the different readings of the word *morē* STILL/NOT YET are triggered by the telicity of the predicate it modifies. Likewise, it seems plausible that one and the same expression, *maitune*, was used in Kove to encode both STILL and NOT YET. In the course of time, the positive concept came to be encoded by a more complex form *ghamaitune*, which is clearly a univerbation of the erstwhile expression and a linking morpheme, while the simplex form was retained in contexts with negative reading. If this hypothesis is correct, then we have a differentiation of the encodings for the STILL and NOT YET senses, which were previously encoded by a single form, probably with a very general abstract sense.

6.3.4 Summary

Within the limits of this study, we have only been able to scratch the surface of the processes that lead to the renewal of continuative expressions in Austronesian. The data examined here allow for the following conclusions. First, as just discussed, encodings for STILL tend to be very general, multifunctional expressions and their specific reading is highly dependent on context. Second, encodings for STILL that can be traced to older, reconstructed expressions are commonly relegated to another domain, very often the domain of negation to encode the sense NOT YET; in the positive sense they either combine with another semantically congruent lexical item or are replaced by it. Third, similar variation and processes of renewal are observed with expressions of STILL that show no connection to the older reconstructed expressions *PA or *NA. While little is known of the history of these expressions, it is reasonable to assume that even if they themselves might be of substantial diachronic age, they are so diverse that they must have evolved after the initial split into more specific and smaller family groupings. Their innovation is observable in the modern languages. Thus the CC is arguably an ongoing/continuing process.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have outlined two pathways for the renewal of STILL expressions. The first one, which we label the CC via replacement, suggests that the erstwhile STILL expression no longer encodes the continuative meaning, and the continuative meaning is expressed by another item, which earlier did not have this function. Of course, replacement of a STILL expression never happens instantaneously, and we typically observe a phase when both the old and the new expressions are used to encode the STILL sense. The sources of new STILL expressions tend to denote some kind of iteration ('always', 'constantly') or stability ('stand', 'settled') and can be adverbs, adjectives, or deverbal expressions. Examples of this kind of development include (but are not limited to) *yet* and *still* in English, *ancu* and *sempri* in Corsican, and *än/ännu* and *fortfarande* in Swedish.

The second pathway, which we label the CC via reinforcement, is highly reminiscent of doubling à la the Jespersen Cycle style of development; see [van der Auwera, Krashnoukhova and Vossen \(2022\)](#).¹⁰ It presupposes that an old STILL expression can no longer encode the STILL sense on its own but rather has to be used together with another lexical item. If an old STILL expression is an adverb, it is typically reinforced by another adverb with iterative semantics ('always', 'again'), as in the case of Russian *vsë eščë*.

We investigated a stratified sample from the Austronesian phylum, one of the world's largest and geographically most widespread phyla. The data examined here demonstrate that the renewal of continuative expressions has been in operation throughout the history of the family, as both cognates of reconstructed expressions and diachronically younger STILL expressions are shown to undergo rounds of renewal. In addition, the Austronesian data have provided yet another path for renewal of continuative expressions. In particular, the data from Kove suggest that renewal of STILL expressions may occur via specification of a general continuative that earlier was underspecified for polarity.

The multifunctionality of older STILL expressions is a factor of great significance for their renewal. As pointed out throughout this chapter, STILL expressions commonly demonstrate polysemy, including such meanings as 'more', 'even', and 'already' (cf. also [Panova 2024](#): 216–228 for a typological account). In addition, the polysemy network of STILL expressions can be complemented by accidental homonymy ([Section 6.2.1.3](#)). Another important parameter in the semantic development of STILL expressions is the type of their interaction with negation. In this chapter, we have shown two different (or even opposite) patterns in the extension of STILL to the negative domain. In the case study of Old Church Slavonic, we were able to show that the STILL expression first had a common set of meanings, 'still;

¹⁰ This is one among many publications by these authors on this topic, as individual authors or in joint work.

more; even; already’, and only later started to be used in negative contexts as a dominant NOT YET expression after ousting a typologically less common encoding of a negated ALREADY. On the other hand, diachronically younger STILL expressions, such as Bulgarian *vse ošte* or Swedish *fortfarande*, first tend to develop the sense STILL NOT, then the sense NOT YET, and only after that do they—very rarely—start to display other meanings such as ‘even’. The difference in the developmental pathways of STILL expressions is of course to a large degree determined by their historically earliest meaning (which is not necessarily the continuative).

The different circumstances of emergence of new STILL expressions lead to the fact that new continuatives are never complete synonyms of old ones. For example, in contrast to French *encore*, the French adverb *toujours*, when used in the sense STILL, does not have an implicature that the situation will eventually change (Hansen 2008: 145, 148). For this reason, one might note that during stages of the CC the functions of competing expressions do not show a complete overlap. However, the pathways outlined in this study highlight the fact that in many languages, older STILL expressions become multifunctional, while new, semantically close expressions emerge to provide full or partial encodings of the continuative sense. In other words, there is a functional pressure to renew expressions encoding the sense STILL. This suggests that the continuative is a cognitively stable function. We hope that the pathways of the CC outlined in this chapter capture this phenomenon.

Corpora

BulNC—Bulgarian National Corpus. <http://search.dcl.bas.bg>.

DLKT—Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos tekstynas (The corpus of modern Lithuanian), <http://tekstynas.vdu.lt/tekstynas>.

INFCOR—the lexical database of the Corsican language INFCOR, <https://adecec.net/infcor>.

isTenTen20—Danish Web Corpus 2020, www.sketchengine.eu/istenten-icelandic-corpus.

RNC, Pol-Rus parallel—The Polish-Russian parallel corpus, a part of the Russian National Corpus 2003–2023. <https://ruscorpora.ru/corpus/para-pol>.

RNC—The Russian National Corpus 2003–2023, <https://ruscorpora.ru>.

svTenTen14—Danish Web Corpus 2014, www.sketchengine.eu/svtenten-swedish-corpus.

The counterfactual life cycle

Cyclicity, pragmatics, and modality

Ezra la Roi

7.1 The life cycles of counterfactuals

Counterfactual constructions come in many different grammatical forms, not only across languages but also within the same language. They are used by speakers to refer to an event (broadly defined) which could not take place in the past or the non-past, such as *You should have called yesterday*, *If only he knew what was going on*, or *If he had called, he would have known*. Most research on counterfactual constructions has adopted a synchronic approach and has almost completely restricted itself to counterfactual conditionals; much work, for example, focuses on particular dimensions of these conditionals, such as their truth status (e.g. [Lewis 1973](#); [Starr 2022](#) for an overview of theories within logic and formal linguistics), their pragmatics ([Karttunen 1971](#); [Stalnaker 1975](#); [Dancygier and Sweetser 2005](#)), their formal marking in conditional protases and apodoses ([Lazard 1998](#); [Haiman and Kuteva 2002](#); [Olguín Martínez and Lester 2022](#); [von Prince, Krjinović, and Krifka 2022](#)), and their tense and aspect ([Fleischman 1995](#); [Iatridou 2000, 2009](#); [Karawani 2014](#); [von Prince 2019](#)). Despite such work, there seem to be no easy typological generalizations when it comes to counterfactuals, or counterfactual conditionals for that matter (cf. [Olguín Martínez and Lester 2022](#)). Earlier research had suggested more or less universal elements, such as the use of past-tense forms (e.g. [James 1982](#)) or of the imperfective (e.g. [Fleischman 1995](#)). More recent research has rightly pointed out that it is not just the past tense which is responsible for counterfactual meaning (cf. [Dahl 1997](#)), and nor do counterfactuals consistently use the imperfective crosslinguistically ([Van linden and Verstraete 2008: 1882](#)). Instead, some consensus seems to have emerged that counterfactual constructions typically consist of different elements which combine in specific constructions to generate a counterfactual meaning, such as the perfect and a modal element (as in *should have called*) and the past and a modal element (as with *would*) ([Lazard 1998](#); [Van linden and Verstraete 2008](#)).¹

¹ Actually, [Givón \(1990, 2001: 2:333\)](#) had before already noted that ‘counterfact clauses crosslinguistically tend to be marked by a combination of two semantically conflicting verbal inflections:

Yet, diachronic work on counterfactuals is much more limited, especially work based on diachronic corpus studies. Instead, researchers focusing on the diachrony of counterfactuals tend to provide diachronic overviews based on synchronic snapshots from historical grammars or previous studies.² Examples of this approach are Dahl (1997), Yong (2018), and Patard (2020); they offer synthesizing overviews and respectively describe the evolution of counterfactuals as a counterfactual *life cycle* as the result of a grammaticalization process, a counterfactual *spiral* or a counterfactual *cycle*. Dahl contrasted counterfactual conditionals in stages of the history of Germanic languages and Bulgarian, Yong incorporated these as well as additional diachronies from the secondary literature, such as English (Molencki 1999), and Patard (2020) analysed counterfactual conditionals from Latin into French. The two most important findings from their work are:

- the development of counterfactual constructions goes through at least the following pathways of change: from (i) past-referring to (ii) non-past-referring counterfactuality after which they (iii) may be strengthened or replaced, and
- this temporal reference change has typological validity, regardless of the specific temporal-aspectual system of a language (cf. the evidence offered from aspect-prominent Bulgarian vs. tense-prominent English).

In several recent corpus studies, I have expanded the empirical support for this developmental trajectory: the analysis of different counterfactual constructions (including conditionals, wishes, and modal verbs) from Archaic to Classical Greek (eighth to fourth century BCE) has confirmed the pathway from past-referring to non-past-referring counterfactuality (la Roi 2022a, 2024a, b, c), as well as indicating previously unknown paths out of the counterfactual domain, such as from past-referring counterfactuality in Archaic into past-referring habituality in Classical Greek (la Roi 2023b) and within Classical Greek from non-past-referring deontic modal uses with a counterfactual dimension (e.g. *you should be silent*) into uses without a counterfactual dimension (e.g. *you should come tomorrow*).³

At the same time, there are still many open theoretical and descriptive questions with respect to the development of counterfactual constructions; I address these in this contribution using corpus evidence from the history of Greek and a diachronic survey of Indo-European languages. First, I discuss the theoretical differences in how the evolution of counterfactuals has been conceptualized, respectively as a life

- the prototypically realis past, perfective or perfect.
- the prototypically irrealis future, subjunctive, conditional or modal.

² Cf. Dahl (1997: 109).

³ In fact, the former developmental pathway may have typological significance. Crosslinguistically, the same markers which are used to mark (past) counterfactuality often also mark past habituality (Cristofaro 2004; Mauri, Barotto, and Mattioli 2023), which thus may suggest similar paths of development.

cycle resulting from a grammaticalization process, a spiral, and a cycle. I suggest that the evolution of counterfactuals may but need not be cyclical, which is why the label *counterfactual life cycle* is more apt as a neutral descriptive umbrella term. In fact, the life cycle of counterfactuals is governed by a diverse set of diachronic mechanisms which cannot be simply explained as a more general grammaticalization process (Section 7.2). In Section 7.3, I turn to the corpus evidence from the history of Ancient Greek (eighth century BCE to third century CE), discuss the evidence from the two major constructional groups for the stages of the counterfactual life cycle, and illustrate the impact of different diachronic processes (e.g. insubordination, innovation, and reinforcement), as well as synchronic factors (especially pragmatics of usage, language contact, and language ecology) on the evolution of counterfactual constructions. Since it is demonstrated that the role of cyclicity in the counterfactual life cycle can only be properly evaluated when counterfactuals are compared across millennia, I turn in Section 7.4 to a diachronic survey of counterfactual conditionals from Ancient to Modern Indo-European languages; I show briefly that cyclical processes of substitution take place at various speeds in different languages, as they are influenced by system-internal factors and prescriptivism. Section 7.5 concludes this contribution.

7.2 The counterfactual life cycle

Following a suggestion by Jespersen, Dahl had suggested that pluperfects in counterfactual conditionals are first used with past temporal reference, after which some come to be used with non-past temporal reference (e.g. *If I had had money (now)* in English or Swedish). He comments: ‘We thus see that a construction with the original function of a counterfactual with past time reference may be reinterpreted as a counterfactual without time restrictions. This kind of development on one hand looks like a fairly well-behaved case of grammaticalization’ (Dahl 1997: 108). What remains rather unclear is the specific types of diachronic processes that he envisaged as playing a role (other than a form of bleaching away of the past temporal reference). For example, his tentative life cycle of counterfactuals is clearly couched in grammaticalization terms such as ‘optional’, ‘obligatory’, and ‘constraint’:

- (1) In the first stage, the marker would be (a) restrained to past time reference, (b) imply counterfactuality in the strict sense (dependence on a condition known to be false), (c) be optional.
- (2) In the second stage, the marker would become obligatory in past counterfactual contexts.
- (3) Then, the constraints on its use would be gradually relaxed. The first thing to go would be the temporal condition, with examples like (20–21) coming first.

- (4) Once the construction has become possible with non-past reference, the risk that the counterfactuality constraint is also relaxed will be imminent. (Dahl 1997: 109)

Yet, I would argue that this grammaticalization trajectory, whereby an optional element becomes obligatory, does not do justice to the synchronic and diachronic variation which we find in counterfactual systems; for example, even in English other markers such as modal *wolde/would* continued to be used in the same counterfactual environments (Moléncki 1999). Moreover, new markers may provide an *innovation*⁴ to the counterfactual system, such as the use of the pluperfect indicative in counterfactuals in Ancient Greek, which is an innovation with respect to the inherited optative strategy that could not be used in this aspectual configuration in Archaic Greek (la Roi 2022a: 239 note 7).

Yong (2018) provided further typological testing of Dahl's life cycle and suggested that other languages, too, seem to document similar evolutionary stages. From a theoretical perspective, however, the picture offered by Yong is decidedly vague, as the terms *life cycle*, *cycle*, and *spiral* are all used to describe the diachronic development of counterfactual markers. The process is called a cycle several times, but no supporting evidence is offered for this interpretation other than pointing to the Jespersen Cycle in negation. The picture offered is that of a 'spiral evolutionary path', as the quote shows:

Stage I: The form (i) is employed in the CF sentences with past time references, (ii) implies counterfactuality with the help of pragmatic contexts (dependence on a condition known to be false), and (iii) is optional.

Stage II (grammaticalization: reanalysis): The form becomes obligatory in the past CF sentences and the generated counterfactuality is less influenced by pragmatic inference.

Stage III (grammaticalization: analogy): Then, with the gradual relaxation of temporal constraints, the marker extends to the CFs with non-past references.

Stage IV (grammaticalization: reanalysis): The form becomes obligatory in the non-past CF sentences.

Stage V (renovation by reinforcement): The counterfactuality is weakened after extending use of the forms. Then another form from TAM inventory is needed to emphasize the counterfactuality in the past reference. Then Stage I, II III, IV will be repeated again. (Yong 2018: 195)

Aside from the notable absence of corpus evidence for some stages (especially stages IV and V), the life cycles of counterfactuals are indeed likely to be better

⁴ I take 'innovation' to refer to 'a mechanism whereby a new grammatical category is created for which earlier there was no conventionalized category in the language concerned' (Narrog and Heine 2021: 142).

interpreted as having a spiral-like shape due to their potential to renew existing systems (as discussed above with respect to the pluperfect). Also, it is useful that Yong indicated more specific grammaticalization processes thought to be relevant at each stage (e.g. analogy, reanalysis), even though not all diachronic changes to counterfactuals can be explained under these more general headers (see [Section 7.3](#) below on the role of insubordination, reinforcement, and language contact).

[Patard \(2020\)](#) provides a similar theoretical picture, as a process whereby counterfactual markers start with a context-inferred counterfactual meaning which conventionalizes across usage contexts, but she usefully points out the relevance of quantity implicatures in the generation of counterfactual meanings of the imperfect (based on [Ziegeler 2000](#); [Van linden and Verstraete 2008](#)). Moreover, she offers the important insight that previously counterfactual markers which already had obtained a non-past reference may obtain non-past non-counterfactual uses (which she calls ‘unlikely’ usages), as reportedly shown by the hypothetical use of the imperfect indicative in Late Latin. A point where I disagree, however, is her conceptualization of the evolution of counterfactual imperfects in different Romance languages as several separate *cycles*: on the one hand, a spiral path provides a more accurate view (due to the possibility of innovations); on the other hand, the continued variation between inherited and replacing imperfect strategy which we observe diachronically in Latin, French, and Italian can hardly be different cyclical processes when the origins of the replacement process had already started in Latin for French and Italian (*la Roi* forthcoming b; see [Section 7.4](#)).

Having demonstrated some major theoretical and descriptive limitations in the conceptualization of the evolution of counterfactuals, I now provide an alternative proposal. First of all, I suggest using the term *life cycle* to describe the diachrony of counterfactual markers. The most important reason for this is that not all counterfactual markers go through every stage of the life cycle (as shown by the relative absence of full documented spirals across counterfactual constructions). Secondly, I suggest simplifying the stages of the counterfactual life cycle, reducing them to three in order to avoid viewing the complex histories of counterfactuals through a rather general ‘grammaticalization process’ lens: by specifying only three stages that are not defined by one single diachronic process of ‘grammaticalization’ (in the broader sense), we are able to pinpoint several different diachronic processes that play a role in each stage and to specify the different pragmatic mechanisms and synchronic factors which (co)determine the developmental trajectories of counterfactuals. As such, I propose the following *counterfactual life cycle*:

- Stage 0 Construction A does not have a counterfactual usage
- Stage 1 Construction A has a past-referring counterfactual usage
- Stage 2 Construction A has a non-past-referring counterfactual usage

Stage 3 Construction A has an unstable counterfactual usage which reveals itself in that:

- (a) construction A develops a post-counterfactual function with non-past reference,
- (b) the counterfactual usage of A is reinforced with additional marking,
- (c) counterfactual usages of A are substituted by another construction.

Thirdly, I would argue that a three-stage system with discrete usage differences is a parsimonious solution because it accounts for the fact that counterfactual markers with similar functions (but likely different pragmatic motivations⁵) coexist synchronically and that substitutions replace older strategies usage by usage (see [la Roi 2022a](#) for examples from Ancient Greek) and that different diachronic processes may shape the creation of each stage (cf. [Section 7.3](#) below). Fourth and finally, the open tail end of the life cycle intentionally shows the different paths which evolved counterfactual markers may take, underlining that a spiral-like substitution is but one of the options.⁶ In the following section, I use the diachronic corpus evidence for the two major constructional schemas in Ancient Greek (eighth century BCE to third century CE) to illustrate how different (i) pragmatic factors (e.g. implicature and expressive enrichment), (ii) diachronic processes (e.g. reinforcement, innovation, and contact-induced change), and (iii) language-ecological factors (e.g. alternatives and their frequency in the synchronic system) code-terminate the progress of constructions along the stages of the counterfactual life cycle.

7.3 Diachronic evidence from the history of Ancient Greek (eighth century BCE to third century CE)

7.3.1 Overview

This corpus evidence provides novel insights into the synchronic and diachronic factors involved in the counterfactual life cycle because Ancient Greek has many different counterfactual strategies, as well as a rich textual record in which their development can be traced. To maximize the value of our results, I discuss the following two major constructional schemas that provide the bulk of counterfactual strategies:⁷

⁵ As a parallel, we may consider the pragmatically restricted status of negators in the Jespersen Cycle (cf. [Schwenter 2006](#); [Hansen and Visconti 2009](#)).

⁶ *Substitution* refers to the replacement of expression A by largely equivalent expression B once expression A has fallen into disuse ([Narrog and Heine 2021](#): 139–141).

⁷ I cannot discuss the complex trajectory of the so-called counterfactual wish particle here (cf. [Allan 2013](#); [Revuelta Puigdollers 2017](#); [la Roi 2022a](#): 266–277).

- (i) Inflectional mood combinations: the inherited optative mood and the innovative past indicative, which have to occur with the modal particle in matrix and subordinate clauses, except in conditional protases (see la Roi 2022c) and when the counterfactuality of the matrix clause is transferred to the temporal and causally dependent subordinate clause (la Roi 2023a)
- (ii) Modal verbs in the past imperfective: boulomaic, deontic, and epistemic modal verbs

Moreover, these strategies have received recent attention in scholarship (e.g. Gerö 2001; Allan 2013; Revuelta Puigdollers 2017; Ruiz Yamuza 2021; la Roi 2022a, 2024a, b, c), though most have focused on the earlier stages (especially Classical Greek), with only a few paying attention to Post-Classical Greek (cf. e.g. la Roi forthcoming a). For the glossing of the examples, I have relied on the Leipzig glossing system but added labels where necessary (e.g. mod = the modal particles *án/ke/ken*, ptc = discourse particle, plpf = pluperfect, opt = optative mood, ao = the perfective aorist). Since Ancient Greek has a complex tense, aspect and modality (TAM) system, I specify the tense-aspect only for past indicative forms, glossing optatives only as *opt*. The past indicatives used as an inflectional mood strategy may occur in the imperfect(ive), the aorist (perfective) and the past perfect; that is, pluperfect. The translations used in this contribution are based on the Loeb translations, unless mentioned otherwise.⁸ To refer to individual authors in examples, I use the conventions of the LSJ dictionary.⁹ The text for the Ancient Greek examples comes from the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.¹⁰ To facilitate cross-comparison, I now discuss their evolutionary progress stage by stage.

7.3.2 Stage 1 in the life cycle of counterfactual past indicatives

As for inflectional mood combinations, we find two coexisting systems in Archaic Greek, since the counterfactual usages of the optative (inherited from Proto-Indo-European¹¹) are still being replaced by the innovative counterfactual indicative (la Roi 2022a): the optative is at the end of its counterfactual life cycle and consequently already used for both past and non-past counterfactuality, but the innovative indicative is mostly limited to past-referring counterfactuality, although we find some more limited evidence for stage 2 as well. As explained by la Roi (2022a), the fact that this process is still ongoing is the reason for the overlap in distributional patterns, especially in the Archaic Greek epic of Homer, who

⁸ These translations can be consulted online at www.loebclassics.com.

⁹ These too can be consulted online: www.stoa.org/abbreviations.html.

¹⁰ See <https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu>.

¹¹ Brugmann (1916: 589–591); la Roi (2022a: 276, 2024c).

mixed diachronic varieties in his orally composed epic. To illustrate, one may find examples such as (1), where the inherited and replacing strategy are used side by side to express past counterfactuality.

- (1) *ô philoi Argeiôn hēgētores hēdè médontes*
 VOC friends-VOC Argive-GEN leaders-NOM and consultants-NOM
ei mén tis tòn óneiron Akhaiôn állos
 if PTC INDF ART dream-ACC Achaeans-GEN other-NOM
énispe pseûdós ken phaîmen kai nosphizoímetha
 tell-AO-3SG lie-ACC MOD say-OPT-1PL and turn-away-OPT-1PL
mállon
 rather

My friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, **if** anyone else of the Achaeans **had told** us this dream, **we would have said** it was a lie and rather turned away from it (Il. 2.79–81)

At the same time, one encounters examples where only the innovative counterfactual indicative (see example (2)) or only the inherited counterfactual optative strategy (see example (3)) is used. There are distributional limitations on the inherited strategy: in conditional protases the occurrences only refer to the non-past (as in example (3)), demonstrating that the past indicative had already taken over these functions in these contexts as part of a larger *substitution* process.

- (2) *ei dè phthenksaménou teu è audésantos*
 if PTC utter-a-sound-PTCP-GEN someone-GEN or speak-PTCP GEN
ákouse sún ken áraks hēméōn kephalàs kai
 hear-AO-3SG with MOD hurl-AO-3SG ours-GEN heads-ACC and
néia doûra marmároi okrióenti balón:
 ship-ACC wooden-ACC marble-DAT sharp-DAT throw-PTCP-NOM

And had he **heard** one of us uttering a sound or speaking, **he would have hurled** a jagged rock and crushed our heads and the timbers of our ship. (Od. 9.497–499)

- (3) *ei keinón g' ithákēnde idoíato nostēsanta*
 If he-ACC PTC Ithaca-ALL see-OPT-3PL return-PTCP-ACC
 Were they to **see** him returned to Ithaca, ... (Od. 1.163)

Yet, the optative was still used for past counterfactuality in other contexts such as declarative main clauses (see example (1)), interrogatives (one occurrence,

Il. 19.90), and wishes (see example (4) below). Note again how the example attests to the *layering*¹² of counterfactual functions in the optative strategy, as respectively present-referring and past-referring counterfactuality are expressed in the same sentence by the optative.

- (4) *Nūn mèn mēt' eiēs, bougáie, mēte génoio*
 Now PTC nor be-OPT-2SG braggart-VOC nor be-born-OPT-2SG
ei dè toûtón ge troméeis kai déidias ainôs,
 if PTC DEM PTC tremble-PRS-2SG and fear-PRF-2SG terribly
ándra géronta dúēi arēménon, hé min hikáneí.
 man-ACC old-ACC woe-ACC heavy-ACC rel he-ACC reach-PRS-3SG
 Braggart, **I wish you did not exist now, nor had ever been born**, if (it is true that) you tremble before this fellow and fear him so terribly—an old man, overcome by the woe that has come upon him. (Od. 18.79–81)

Furthermore, other diachronic processes, too, are involved in the genesis of stage 1 counterfactuals, such as the process of *insubordination*. Insubordination refers to the diachronic conventionalization of main clause uses by formally subordinate clauses (Evans 2007: 367). The key distinction between insubordinate constructions and subordinate clause constructions is that insubordinate constructions are discursively independent (D'Hertefelt 2018: 182–183; la Roi 2021: 6–9); their illocutionary force is not co-constructed with parts of the linguistic context, such as syntactically independent usages of subordinate clauses anchored to previous utterances in dyadic contexts. The impact of insubordination on the counterfactual domain of wishes should not be underestimated for at least¹³ two reasons: (1) the inherited usage evidenced in example (4) was replaced by an insubordinate strategy that made use of the optative as well, as shown in example (5); (2) the optative in these constructions is diachronically replaced by different mood combinations with the past indicative (see la Roi 2022a: 266–275 for an overview).¹⁴

¹² As defined by Narrog and Heine (2021: 46): 'Layering means that new layers of structure arising via grammaticalization may coexist with older layers within a broad functional domain of a language, with the two, or more kinds of layers interacting with one another'. The notion originates with Hopper (1991).

¹³ Additionally, there is crosslinguistic evidence that insubordination can create counterfactual wishes, for example, *If only* English, *Si (seulement)* French, *Wenn nur* German, *Que* Spanish, *Bare* Danish, and *Als (maar)* Dutch (as shown by the overview provided by la Roi 2021: 6).

¹⁴ See similarly la Roi (2022e) on Archaic and Classical Latin.

- (5) *ei gār egōn hoútō ge Diōs páis aigiókhoio*
 if-only I-nom so PTC Zeus-GEN child-NOM aegis-wearing-GEN
eīēn émata pánta, tékoi dé me
 be-OPT-1SG days-ACC all-ACC conceive-OPT-3SG PTC I-ACC
pótnia hērē
 queen-NOM Hera-NOM

For my part **I wish that I lived** all my days as surely the son of Zeus who bears the aegis, and the queenly Hera **had conceived** me (Il.13.825–826)

Also, as mentioned briefly above, we find some evidence of *innovation*, ‘a mechanism whereby a new grammatical form is created for which there was no earlier conventionalized equivalent’ (Narrog and Heine 2021: 336): the innovation in the aspectual domain of the pluperfect where the inherited optative strategy only had the option of the aorist or imperfect (cf. Il. 8.454 and Hes. *Th.* 703 for a periphrastic and a non-periphrastic example from Archaic Greek).

Finally, pragmatics, too, seems to play a crucial role at stage 1 of their counterfactual life cycle. The most productive syntactic context in which the innovative indicative is found in Archaic Greek is that of the conditional protasis, especially in pragmatically marked contexts; 83 of the total of 93 counterfactual conditionals in Archaic Greek occur the way that they occur in example (6) or (7).

- (6) *Kaí nú ken énth’ apóloito ánaks andrōn Aineías*
 And PTC MOD then die-OPT-3SG lord-NOM men-GEN Aeneas-NOM
ei mē ár’ oksù nóēse Diōs thugatē
 if NEG PTC quickly notice-AO-3SG Zeus-GEN daughter-NOM
 And now the lord of men, Aeneas, **would have perished, had not** the daughter of Zeus quickly **noticed** (i.e. and prevented it, being a god) (Il. 5.311–312)

- (7) *Ka nú ken énth’ ho gērōn apò thumòn*
 And PTC MOD then art-NOM old-man-NOM from heart-ACC
ólessen ei mē ár’ oksù nóēse boēn
 lose-AO-3SG if NEG PTC quickly notice-AO-3SG war-cry-ACC
agathòs Diomédēs
 good-at-NOM Diomedes-NOM
 And now the old man **would have lost his life** there, **had not** Diomedes, good at the war cry, been quick to notice (i.e. and prevented it) (Il. 8.90–91)

Rather than presenting two related events as counterfactual in an iconic way (e.g. *If I had taken an umbrella, then I would have stayed dry*), these conditional

protases rather present the epistemic basis, as it were, for the counterfactuality of the death reported in the matrix clause. In pragmatic terms, these conditional sentences are direct inferential sentences where *p* provides the epistemic source for *q* (Declerck and Reed 2001: 42–44). From a communicative perspective, these pragmatic structures are useful to the Homeric narrator to generate suspense and emphasize the power of certain actors in the story: it is true that it was only due to person X that person Y didn't die. Also, example (7) provides the innovative alternative formula with the past indicative for the older formula with the optative in example (6).

7.3.3 Stage 2 in the life cycle of counterfactual past indicatives

For stage 2 of their counterfactual life cycle, we find some evidence in Archaic Greek, but most comes from Classical Greek, as the counterfactual usage of the indicative conventionalizes within the synchronic language system especially in Classical Greek. Example (8) provides an illustrative example of the role played by aspectual implicature in the early origins of stage 2 in Archaic Greek: the imperfect offers an unbounded viewpoint on the event of 'not having much to say', which pragmatically implicates that this 'incomplete' event continued from the past (i.e. when Odysseus had perished already in the eyes of the speaker and the addressee had been urging Telemachus on) into the present, where the addressee is still doing that. Note also the layering of different diachronic variants observable in example (8) of the present-referring counterfactual optative and indicative being used in the same context.

- (8) [As for Odysseus, he has perished far away, as you also should have perished with him.]

<i>ouk</i>	<i>àn</i>	<i>tóssa</i>	<i>theopropéōn</i>	<i>agóreues,</i>
NEG	MOD	so-much-ACC	prophesize-PTCP-NOM	proclaim-IPFV-2SG
<i>oudé</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>Tēlémakhon</i>	<i>kekholōménon</i>	<i>hōd'</i>
nor	MOD	Telemachus-ACC	angry-ptcp-ACC	this-way
<i>aníēĩs</i>				
urge-on-OPT-2SG				

Then you would not **have** so much **to say** in your reading of signs, or be urging Telemachus on in his anger (Od. 2.182–185)

Additionally, the diachronic corpus evidence shows that examples such as (8) have been instrumental in another way, too: atelic events are not only the origins of temporal reference change (as in example (8)) but continue to be the source for non-past usages of counterfactual indicatives; in Classical Greek, we find 272

atelic (96 per cent) versus 11 telic (4 per cent) present-referring *imperfects* in counterfactual conditional protases, which provides a stark contrast to the only 17 present-referring aorists and 9 pluperfects in the same syntactic context in Classical Greek.

By the same token, aspectual semantics may provide an answer to why the perfective (i.e. aorist) comes to be used (in stage 2) to express non-past events, as its bounded viewpoint might have been thought to make this unlikely. In both examples (9) and (10), we find present-referring usages of the aorist in examples from respectively Classical and Early Post-Classical Greek. A motivation for the development of this perfective non-past counterfactual use may have been *expressiveness* (cf. [Narrog and Heine 2021](#): 162–166), as these uses present a counterfactual present event which is presented as ‘complete’, as it were; in example (9) the addressee could not have produced the document now (as he does not have it) and in example (10) the speaker of the Psalm signals that it is counterfactual that the Lord wants to see the speaker complete a sacrifice (the perfective of the stative predicate ‘want’) because the speaker is already praising him extensively in his Psalm.

- (9) [‘As I cite these decrees, Aeschines, you must cite some decree by proposing which I became responsible for the war’.]

all’ ouk àn ékhois; ei gàr eíkhes,
But NEG MOD can-OPT-2SG if PTC can-IPFV-2SG

oudèn àn autoû próteron nuni paréskhou.
in-no-way MOD it-GEN sooner now provide-AO-2SG

But you cannot cite one; if you could, there is no document which you **would produce more readily now**. (D. 18.76.1–4)

- (10) *ei èthélēsas thusían, édōka án.*
if want-AO-2SG sacrifice-ACC give-AO-1SG MOD

If you **wanted** a sacrifice **I would give** it you (LXX Ps. 50.17–18)

In fact, the equivalent examples given by [Jespersen \(1925](#): 266) and [Dahl \(1997](#): 106) of a present counterfactual expression with an ‘unexpected’ temporal-aspectual marker (examples (11) and (12)) seem to occur in a similar context of expressive strengthening: one would use such expressions to more explicitly deny having money; that is, forcing a bounded reading on an atelic event.

- (11) If I had had money enough (at the present moment), I would have paid you (now). (English)

- (12) Om jag hade haft pengar nu, skulle jag ha betalat dig. (Swedish)

Secondly, we find the counterfactual indicative in novel contexts in which it could not have been found before, such as in so-called indirect inferential conditionals or ad absurdum conditionals (see la [Roi 2022b](#): 283–291 for the Ancient Greek evidence). This type has been defined by [Declerck and Reed \(2001: 61\)](#) as ‘an inferential conditional in which the inference goes from Q to P. The communicative purpose of an indirect inferential is to make the hearer draw an inference about the truth of P’. In English, one could think of examples such as: *If he were rich, he would not drive around in such a cheap car* or *If he were rich, why would he drive around in such a cheap car?* In both cases, the main clause serves to point out the counterfactuality of the presupposition in the preceding protasis. The same pragmatic structures occur in Classical Greek examples such as example (13), where the speaker presents it as counterfactual that he has financial means.

- (13) *ei gàr ekektēmēn ousían, ep’ astrábēs àn*
 if PTC owe-PLPF-1SG wealth-acc on saddled-GEN MOD
ōkhoúmēn, all’ ouk epì toùs allotríous híppous
 go-IPFV-1SG but NEG on art-ACC other-people’s-ACC horses-ACC
anébainon
 mount-IPFV-1SG
If I were a man of means, I would ride on a saddled mule, and **would not mount** other men’s horses. [But in fact, as I am unable to acquire anything of the sort, I am compelled, now and again, to use other men’s horses] (Lys. 24.11)

These conditionals make up 26 per cent of all counterfactual conditionals in Classical Greek (la [Roi 2022b](#): 283), which would suggest that this function was expressively important.

Third and finally, we find morphosyntactic evidence for the conventionalized status of the counterfactual use of the indicative in Classical Greek: the counterfactual indicative has, on the one hand, taken over the syntactic contexts in which the counterfactual use of the optative was found before (e.g. in declarative and interrogative main clauses) and, on the other hand, spread beyond those contexts, especially to other subordinate clause types such as relative, result, and temporal clauses (la [Roi 2022a](#): 254).

7.3.4 Stage 3 in the life cycle of counterfactual past indicatives

For the final stage of their counterfactual life cycle, there seems to be some limited evidence for a process of *strengthening*, albeit only in (i) written language contact settings and (ii) the specific morphosyntactic context of insubordinate wishes

in Middle Post-Classical Greek. In the language of the Septuagint translations, we find alternative strategies to express the counterfactual apodosis alongside the use of the modal particle: negation, adverbs, and inferential particles (see example (14) for *nûn* and *oûn* and example (15) for doubling up on negation in both the protasis and apodosis). La Roi (forthcoming a) shows that this pattern is the result of written language contact with BH in which the modal particle was lacking (cf. also Tjen 2010). Moreover, such contact-induced patterns have only been transmitted from the Septuagint to the New Testament (see example (15)).

- (14) *kai ei mèn: ekséklinen, nûn oûn sè mèn*
 And if NEG turn-away-AO-2SG now PTC you-ACC PTC
apékteina, ekeinên dè periepoiēsamên.
 kill-AO-3SG it-ACC PTC keep-safe-AO-1SG
 And if it had not turned away, **now surely I would have killed you** but kept it alive (LXX Nu.22.33)

- (15) *ei mèn êlthon kai elálēsa autoîs, hamartían*
 If NEG come-AO-1SG and speak-AO-1SG them-DAT sin-ACC
ouk eíkhosan; Nûn de próphasin ouk ékhousin
 NEG have-IPFV-3PL now PTCL excuse-ACC NEG have-PRS-3PL
perì tēs hamartías autô:n
 about art-GEN sin-GEN them-GEN

If I had not come and spoken to them, they **would not be guilty** of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. (NT *Ev.Jo.* 15.22)

Examples such as (14) and (15) have for a long time been hailed as evidence for the loss of the modal particle in Post-Classical Greek counterfactual apodoses (e.g. Horrocks 1995: 165; 2010: 236–238; di Bartolo 2023), but this completely disregards two crucial distributional facts: such patterns only occur in sources affected by written language contact (i.e. the Septuagint and New Testament) and the patterns with the modal particle in the apodosis continue to be the dominant option well into Post-Classical Greek (la Roi forthcoming a).¹⁵

In fact, the norm of using the modal particle in counterfactual apodoses is likely to be the analogical source for the reinforcement of insubordinate wishes. Reinforcement is usually seen as a ‘mechanism whereby a grammatical marker A is supported by some additional expression B “strengthening” the

¹⁵ They also state that the use of epistemic modal verbs in apodoses without the modal particle would be an innovation, but this is again not true, as they could already occur without modal particles in Classical Greek (see la Roi 2022c).

meaning of A, the new marker thus being AB' (Narrog and Heine 2021: 121). In Middle Post-Classical Greek there are some novel insubordinate wish patterns that came to use the modal particle analogically this way (la Roi 2021: 24–25).

7.3.5 Stage 1 in the life cycle of counterfactual modal verbs

The past counterfactual use of previously non-counterfactual past modal verbs seems to derive from a particular quantity implicature: in the Gricean context of trying to be as informative as possible, the speaker states the past 'potentiality' of an event (expressed in the conjoined infinitive) to invite the addressee to infer the opposite end of the modal scale; that is, *not* past 'potentiality' (Ziegeler 2000: 32–34; Van linden and Verstraete 2008; Wakker 1994: 152 already for Ancient Greek). It is well known that the domain of quantifiers has such a scalar functional organization (cf. how *some* implicates 'not all', e.g. *I have some money in my pocket*). A similar scalar organization affects modal expressions, which denote a form of uncertainty, especially when combined with the past, because the past usually involves certainty but not in combination with a modal expression. As discussed more extensively by Van linden and Verstraete (2008: 1877), 'modal structures like *would (have) q* can be regarded as the middle point of a scale with the corresponding non-modal structure *q* as its strongest point, and the corresponding conditional structure *if p, would (have) q* as its weakest point'. As a result, when a speaker uses a past potentiality (e.g. *ought to* + PAST), they may implicate that this past potentiality was *not* achieved; that is, the other end of the scale.¹⁶ 'Potentiality' should here be seen as a cover term for the different modal values which can be found in counterfactuality, in particular deontic (e.g. *I ought to have*), epistemic (e.g. *I would have*), and boulomaic modality (e.g. *I wished*). In Classical Greek, we witness the development of counterfactual functions of modal verbs belonging to these three subdomains (cf. la Roi 2024a and 2024b for an overview), meaning that they have a counterfactual function without the necessity of adding the modal particle (but see below on occurrences with it). Besides this more general pragmatic mechanism, the counterfactual meaning of a past modal verb may also be signalled in the linguistic common ground: note how in example (16) the counterfactual reading of the modal verb combination (*viz. I ought to have died*) is evoked by the preceding words of the speaker (*viz. I did not die*).

¹⁶ As Van linden and Verstraete (2008: 1878) put it: 'Given that a modalized version of *p* is weaker than an unmodalized version, using the modalized version implicates the negation of its unmodalized counterpart'.

- (16) *kágōg' ár' ouk éthnēiskon hoû m' ekhrēn*
 and=I PTC NEG die-IPFV-1SG rel-GEN I-ACC ought-IPFV-3SG
thaneîn
 die-INF

I did not die, it now appears, **when I ought to have died** (E. *Hec.* 231)

Moreover, these counterfactuals seem to fulfil specific expressive needs on the part of the speaker, as they are used, for example, to express forms of reproach or epistemic assessment. In example (17), the boulomaic past counterfactual provides a negative assessment of the previous speaker in the form of a complaint. In example (18), Medea uses the deontic past counterfactual to both reproach Jason for his actions and to counterargue that he is actually particularly knavish (as a result of the indirect inferential structure).

- (17) *eboulómēn mēn héteron àn tôn ēthádōn*
 want-IPFV-1SG PTC other-ACC MOD art-ACC usuals-GEN
légein tà béltisth' hín' ekathémēn hēsýkhos.
 speak-INF art-ACC best-things-ACC so-that sit-IPFV-1SG still

I would have preferred that one of the usual speakers had offered the best counsel, so that I could have sat still. (Ar. *Ec.* 151–152)

- (18) *khērēn s', eíper ēstha mē kakós,*
 ought-IPFV-3SG you-ACC if=PTC be-IPFV-2SG NEG bad-NOM
peísantá me gameîn gámon tónd',
 convinced-PTCP-ACC I-ACC marry-INF marriage-ACC dem-ACC
allà mē sigēi phílōn.
 but NEG silence-DAT family-GEN

if you were not a knave, you ought to have gained my consent before making this marriage, not done it behind your family's back. (E. *Med.* 585–586)

7.3.6 Stage 2 in the life cycle of counterfactual modal verbs

Stage 2 in the life cycle of counterfactual modal verbs reveals itself quickly in the data in Classical Greek, where non-past usages of especially deontic and boulomaic modal verbs are developed rapidly. Consider the present-referring counterfactual usages of the deontic modal verbs (*e*)*khērēn* 'should' and *édei* 'ought' in fifth-century versus fourth-century Classical Greek: as detailed in la Roi (2024b), they show a strong preference for occurring as atelic states-of-affairs

(e.g. states or activities): (*e*)*khrẽn* occurs in atelic contexts 80 per cent of the time in fifth-century Classical Greek (= 34 out of 42) and 100 per cent of the time (= three out of three) in fourth-century Classical Greek,¹⁷ while the present-referring use of *édei* occurs in atelic contexts 87.5 per cent of the time in fifth-century Classical Greek and 84 per cent of the time in fourth-century Classical Greek. The application of the unbounded perspective on an event without end (i.e. atelic state of affairs) must have generated the temporal reference shift from the past to the present, not only for modal verbs but also for inflectional moods (cf. la Roi 2022a for the dominance of this group in the data and that comparatively rare future-referring counterfactuals all consist of atelic imperfectives). Besides the conventionalization of this temporal implicature, pragmatics also plays a key role in the use of these modal verbs with reference to the present, something which can be illustrated with example (21) below. The nurse uses this negated counterfactual modal to explicitly reproach Phaedra for doing something that is communicatively undesirable, viz. remain silent. With its present reference, such a usage thus allows the speaker to express the undesirability of ongoing events rather than events from the past (for which past-referring modal verbs had to be used). Although it has been argued that such past uses of counterfactual modal verbs function as markers of negative politeness such as deference and hedges (Ruiz Yamuza 2021 with respect to these deontic modal verbs in Classical Greek), I would argue that impoliteness plays a more important role for these counterfactual deontic modals, insofar as we often find them in contexts of impoliteness, such as in (18) or in (19) below, where the deontic modal expresses a form of reproach.¹⁸

- (19) *eíhen*, *tí sigâis?* *ouk ekhrēn* *sigân*
 PTC Q be-silent-PRS-2SG NEG ought-IPFV-3SG be-silent-INF
 (Phaedra is silent.) Anyway, why are you silent? **You ought not** to be
 silent, child (E. *Hipp.* 297)

7.3.7 Stage 3 in the life cycle of counterfactual modal verbs

Because of the speedy temporal reference change of modal verbs in the imperfective (especially with atelic state of affairs), we find evidence for stage 3 already in Classical Greek: the deontic modal verbs discussed above developed a post-counterfactual usage in Classical Greek, as illustrated by example (20) where

¹⁷ Examples from my corpus are E. *Med.* 890, *Hec.* 1187, *Hipp.* 297, 925, and Hdt. 1.39.7, 2.20.8, 4.118.8.

¹⁸ See van Olmen (2018) for the reproach function of counterfactual ‘past imperatives’ in several languages.

the modal verbs refer to something which ought to happen in the future. The origins of this new usage are likely to lie in the generation of another temporal implicature: moving from a contextual suggestion that something should be the case when it is not (= present-referring counterfactuality) to simply pointing out that something should be the case (= non-past necessity), whether that is the case or not.

- (20) *en hōi élegon hōs khrēn humâ:s eulabeîsthai*
 when say-IPFV-3PL that ought-IPFV-3SG you-ACC take-care-INF
mè: hup' emoû eksapatēthēte hōs deinoû
 NEG by I-GEN be-deceived-AO-2PL that clever-GEN
óntos légein
 be-PTCP-GEN speak-INF

when they said that you **must be** on your guard not to be deceived by me, because I am a clever speaker. (Pl. *Ap.* 17a5–7)

However, these usages do not become available to all modal verbs in an equal way, thus demonstrating that these modal verbs have their own individual life cycles: epistemic modal verbs do not develop such uses in the periods considered here (such as hypothetical ‘would’ in English, e.g. *She would win in a marathon*) but boulomaic modal verbs do, although only later.¹⁹ In example (21), we can observe that the counterfactual implication has bleached away in this usage (note the positive answer which follows).

- (21) *Eboulómēn kai autòs toû anthrôpou akoûsai.*
 Want-IPFV-1SG also self-NOM art-GEN man-GEN hear-INF
Aúrion, phēsín, akóúsēi autoû
 tomorrow say-PRS-3SG hear-FUT-2SG he-GEN
 ‘**I would like to** hear the man myself’. ‘Tomorrow’, he said, ‘you will hear him’. (NTActs 25:22)

At the same time, there is considerable evidence for analogical reinforcement of these modal verbs, both in Classical Greek and in Post-Classical Greek. Generally, those modal verbs which have conventionalized a counterfactual usage do not need the modal particle to mark their counterfactuality. This contrasts with non-modal verbs that are found in counterfactual main clauses, which do need the modal particle. However, there is an exceptional and relatively infrequent group of

¹⁹ In addition, a construction used for counterfactual wishes (*ôphelon* + past indicative) extends to the non-counterfactual domain as well in Post-Classical Greek (see [Revuelta Puigdollers 2017: 182–184](#)).

occurrences of these productive counterfactual modal verbs *with the modal particle*. I have demonstrated (la Roi 2022c: 123–126; 2024a, 2024b) that the latter group has been created through analogical strengthening; that is, in analogy with the normative use of the modal particle with non-modal verbs that do not conventionalize a counterfactual usage. After all, the corpus evidence from Classical Greek shows that boulomaic, deontic, and epistemic modal verbs have developed counterfactual usages without the modal particle early on in Classical Greek, but are found with the modal particle later on (e.g. *khreîn* ‘should have’ without the modal particle at E. *El.* 357 vs. with the modal particle at D. 18.195). Moreover, there are unproductive counterfactual modal verbs that only occur with the modal particle in matrix clauses, such as epistemic modal verbs like *huparkhō* ‘be possible’ or *éneimi* ‘be possible’. As suggested by la Roi (2024b), the low productivity and conventionalization of counterfactual uses of epistemic modal verbs in Classical Greek may have had a language-ecological motivation: the past indicative was very productive for epistemic counterfactuals (e.g. in conditional sentences or simple declarative clauses), which, from an expressive point of view, would make epistemic modal verbs only necessary when a speaker wanted to add specific semantic aspects, such as of imminence as with *émelle* ‘was about to’ or possibility (with a variety of impersonal epistemic modals).

In Early and Middle Post-Classical Greek, the distributional spread of these patterns seems to have been motivated by the linguistic prescriptivism of Atticism. Linguistic Atticism refers to a prescriptivist movement due to which Post-Classical Greek authors started to imitate the language of Classical Greek authors, thereby ‘atticizing’ their own language. Linguistic Atticism gained traction especially in Middle Post-Classical Greek (first to third century CE) during the so-called Second Sophistic, with the creation of lexica in which certain words and constructions are prescribed (see la Roi 2022d for a historical socio-linguistic analysis). The data for analogical patterns of the counterfactual modal verb seem to match this trend. In early Post-Classical Greek we find both patterns for modal verbs occurring side by side, even within the same author (cf. Plb. 1.3.7 *édei* and *án*, 5.37.10 *eboulómēn* and *án*, D. H. A. R. 9.53.2 *eboulómēn* and *án* vs. Plb. 4.22.10, D. H. A. R. 3.7.5 *édei*, D. H. Dem. 3.18 *eboulómēn*). By contrast, in lower-register papyri from Egypt of this period we only find the usage *without* the modal particle. For Middle Post-Classical Greek, we similarly do not find the pattern with the modal particle in the papyri, or in the middle-register texts such as the New Testament, Epictetus, or Acts of Thomas, but only in the high-register texts of Lucian (e.g. Abd. 20.12 *édei* and *án* and Herm. 81.19 *eboulómēn* and *án*) and Aelius Aristides (e.g. Aristid. 505.14 *édei* and *án* and 151.23 *eboulómēn* and *án*). Thus, the analogical pattern of the modal particle with these counterfactual modal verbs was perceived as an Atticistic norm which high-register authors consciously applied.

7.3.8 Synthesizing the life cycles

Let us now summarize the insights which the linguistic evidence from the history of Ancient Greek has yielded for the counterfactual life cycle.

Stage 1 Construction A has a past-referring counterfactual usage

I have demonstrated that there are different diachronic sources for past counterfactual expressions, viz. past indicative with different aspects and modal verbs of various semantic types. Also, different diachronic processes are responsible for the genesis of this function, such as *insubordination* and *innovation*, with a particular role being played by pragmatic mechanisms such as quantity implicatures and the innovation of expressive means (cf. the innovative use of the pluperfect or the negated deontic modal verbs for reproach). Contrastively, the two constructional groups discussed also showed differences: whereas the innovative contexts in which the innovative indicative was found were pragmatically marked, the modal verbs did not need to occur in such contexts, as they could pragmatically implicate their counterfactuality without it. Lastly, we should not be surprised by the frequent association of the past tense to generate counterfactuals; after all, exactly because what lies in the past is determined in terms of its fulfilment (cf. Dahl 1997: 101). Speakers can use the past to suggest what would have happened but we know did not.

Stage 2 Construction A has a non-past-referring counterfactual usage

The change at stage 2 seems uniformly to be the result of a temporal implicature that semanticized in these markers. The pragmatic motivation for the development of these non-past usages seems to be expressivity as well, as this usage allows speakers to *deny* current events in different ways, such as epistemically (speakers disagree about the truth of something), deontically (speakers reproach others for not doing X), and volitionally (speakers specify their incomplete volition with regard to an event to influence addressees), but also to voice ‘complete’ counterfactual present events (with the perfective in Ancient Greek or with the pluperfect in Germanic). Counterfactuals conventionalize in other ways too: the past indicative spreads through analogy beyond the original confines of the optative that it replaced and both come to be used rhetorically in indirect inferences for counterargumentation.

Stage 3 Construction A has an unstable counterfactual usage which reveals itself in that:

- (a) construction A develops a post-counterfactual function with non-past reference,

- (b) the counterfactual usage of A is strengthened with additional marking,
- (c) counterfactual usages of A are substituted by another construction.

The last stage of the counterfactual life cycle is characterized by *instability* (cf. also the evidence for substitutions discussed in [Section 7.4](#)). First of all, we found the development of post-counterfactual usages in certain modal verbs, notably two deontic and one boulomaic modal verb. Still, these usages developed in different diachronic periods (viz. deontic non-past usages without counterfactuality in Classical Greek and boulomaic non-past usages without counterfactuality in Middle Post-Classical Greek), demonstrating that these modal verbs go through the life cycle individually. Secondly, we found convincing evidence for different types of reinforcement of counterfactual constructions, especially the analogical strengthening of modal verbs with the modal particle in Classical Greek, its prescriptive imitation in high-register Middle Post-Classical Greek texts, and the occasional analogical strengthening of insubordinate wishes in Middle Post-Classical Greek. Thirdly, I demonstrated the impact of language contact on inflectional counterfactual mood combinations in alleged cases of stage 3 ‘substitutions’; alternative strategies without the modal particle in counterfactual apodoses were created in the context of written language contact of the Septuagint translations and transmitted only to the New Testament through written language contact. Fourth and finally, I have detailed how the substitution of the inherited counterfactual optative is reflected in the corpus evidence from Archaic and Classical Greek, with the optative displaying a layering of past and non-past counterfactual functions and the past indicative replacement initially being restricted to past-referring counterfactual contexts in Archaic Greek. Moreover, the past indicative replacements then went through the same stages of development of the counterfactual life cycle that the optative seems to have already passed through.

To expand the scope of evidence for such spiral-shaped cyclical processes, I now move to a brief diachronic survey of Indo-European languages (based on [la Roi 2024c](#)) and discuss the ways in which other Indo-European languages have substituted the inherited optative strategy over time and which factors play a role in this long and complex process.

7.4 A diachronic Indo-European survey

The inherited optative (OPT in [Figure 7.1](#)) seems to have had counterfactual usages already in Proto-Indo-European and has been subject to different diachronic substitutions throughout the history of Indo-European languages (cf. [Brugmann 1930](#): 586 who speaks of ‘Neuerungen der Einzelsprachen’

(innovations of individual languages)). Diachronically, languages have adopted different strategies of substitution; whereas Ancient Greek substituted with a past indicative (IND in Figure 7.1), languages such as Sanskrit, Tocharian, and Old Church Slavonic substituted the inherited optative with a so-called conditional mood (la Roi 2024c)—COND in Figure 7.1. While all these languages still had the optative, they seem to have repurposed it to the ‘hypothetical’ (see column 3 in Figure 7.1), with the optative being used mainly²⁰ for non-past hypothetical reference in Sanskrit and Tocharian, but as an imperative in Old Church Slavonic (la Roi 2024c).²¹ Moreover, the diachronic corpus evidence for Sanskrit reveals a similar replacement process to that found in the Ancient Greek data: in Vedic Sanskrit the inherited optative is used for stage 1 and stage 2 counterfactuality, whereas in Post-Vedic Sanskrit the optative is limited to stage 2 because the ‘conditional mood’ has replaced its stage 1 counterfactuality. Interestingly, the stage 2 use of the optative is only found in the higher Archaic register of Epic Sanskrit, not in the lower register of Vedic Prose, where the ‘conditional mood’ actually has stage 1 and stage 2 counterfactual usages (Oberlies 2003: 166). The languages in which the inherited optative has ultimately syncretized its functions into a ‘subjunctive’ (SBJV in Figure 7.1) also provide corpus evidence for substitutions: in Classical and Post-Classical Latin the past indicative starts replacing the subjunctive (Patard 2020); in Old English we find both the inherited subjunctive and the innovative past indicative (contrast respectively ‘weope’ and ‘wistest’ in example (23) below).

- (23) gif þu **wistest** hwæt þe toward is þonne **weope** þu mid me (ÆCHom i.412.67, Brinton and Bergs 2017: 123)

If you **knew** what is to come to you, then you would weep with me

Note also that Old High German did not replace the inherited subjunctive yet, since their moods stayed morphologically distinct (Lockwood 1968: 128–129 and cf. even Modern German *hätte* and *wäre*), whereas the subjunctive and past indicative underwent morphological syncretism in Old English (Molencki 1999: 79). Figure 7.1 provides an overview of the inflectional counterfactual moods which over time replace the inherited optative in early Indo-European languages (see la Roi 2024c for a full account).

Moreover, prescriptivism has played a role in overusing old counterfactual subjunctives in English, even beyond their original confines (see Leech et al. 2009: 70). In fact, even in languages with rich and relatively stable morphological paradigms,

²⁰ Another usage is for past habituality, a function which must have developed from the past counterfactual use of the optative, as past habituality is expressed by the optative in Tocharian and Epic Sanskrit (la Roi 2024c).

²¹ I have suggested elsewhere that this might be interpreted diachronically as a development of non-counterfactual functions by the optative in stage 3 (la Roi 2024c).

Language		1. Past CF		2. Non-Past CF		3. Hypothetical	
Greek	Archaic Greek	OPT	IND	OPT	IND	OPT	
	Classical Greek	IND		IND		OPT	
Indo-Aryan	Vedic Sanskrit	OPT		OPT		OPT	
	Post-Vedic Sanskrit	COND		COND		OPT	
Iranian	Avestan	OPT		OPT		OPT	
	Old Persian	OPT		OPT		OPT	
Germanic	Gothic	OPT		OPT		OPT	
	Old English	SBJV	IND	SBJV	IND	SBJV	
	Old High German	SBJV		SBJV		SBJV	
Latin	Archaic Latin	SBJV		SBJV		SBJV	
	Classical Latin	SBJV	IND	SBJV	IND	SBJV	
	Post-Classical Latin	SBJV	IND	SBJV	IND	SBJV	IND
Irish	Old Irish	SBJV	IND	SBJV	IND	SBJV	
Tocharian	Tocharian A & B	COND		COND		OPT	
Armenian	Classical Armenian	IND		IND		-	
Anatolian	Hittite	IND		IND		-	
Albanian	Albanian	IND		IND		-	
Slavic	Old Church Slavonic	COND		COND		OPT	

Figure 7.1 A diachronic typology of counterfactual mood in early Indo-European languages.

the past indicative starts to replace inherited subjunctive strategies, as happens, for example, with the imperfect past indicative in contemporary Italian (Mauri, Barotto, and Mattioli 2023; la Roi forthcoming b). Finally, diachronic comparison shows the replacement of inherited counterfactual moods by various modal formations, such as the future marker *tha* with the past in Modern Greek (cf. Iatridou 2000) or English *would have*, as illustrated by the contrast between the translations of the past counterfactual in John 11.21 of the New Testament in the King James versus the modern New International translation.

- (24) Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother **had not died** (NT *John* 11.21, King James 1611)
- (25) ‘Lord’, Martha said to Jesus, ‘if you had been here, my brother **would not have died**’. (NT *John* 11.21, New International Translation 2011)

To sum up, though by necessity brief, I have outlined the substantial evidence for stage 3 substitution of counterfactual strategies in Indo-European languages (see more extensively la Roi 2024c) and underlined that the speed of these substitutions is governed by different factors such as systemic factors of mood distinctiveness, mood syncretism, and social factors of prescriptivism.

7.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have outlined how counterfactual expressions can be studied across language histories in a uniform way. First, I demonstrated some major theoretical and descriptive limitations in the conceptualization of the histories

of counterfactual expressions. I suggested using the more neutral descriptive umbrella of the *counterfactual life cycle* to describe their evolution, since, on the one hand, counterfactual expressions are subject to different diachronic processes and pragmatic mechanisms and, on the other hand, not all counterfactual expressions show a spiral-like cyclical substitution process because substitution is but one of the paths counterfactuals may take out of the domain of counterfactuality. After noting the relative scarcity of diachronic corpus-based studies, I turned to rich corpus evidence from the history of Ancient Greek (eighth century BCE to third century CE) and detailed how two major constructional strategies (viz. inflectional moods and past modal verbs in the imperfect) diachronically make their way through the counterfactual life cycle. On the one hand, I pinpointed the specific diachronic processes relevant for the genesis of stage 1 counterfactuality in the past (e.g. innovation and insubordination), stage 2 counterfactuality in the non-past (e.g. temporal implicature semanticization, analogical spread, and pragmatic enrichment), and stage 3 (e.g. temporal implicature semanticization, analogical reinforcement, contact-induced change, and substitution). On the other hand, I suggested that pragmatic factors play an important role in every stage of the counterfactual life cycle, such as fulfilling expressive pragmatic needs by novel counterfactual usages. Social factors too are important, such as prescriptivist pressures which endow certain counterfactual usages of modal verbs with prestige. Next, I offered a brief survey of the ways in which Indo-European languages have substituted the inherited optative strategy with past indicatives, conditional moods, and modal formations. Comparing the speed with which these substitution processes took place in different Indo-European languages, I have, for example, discussed cases where the counterfactual strategy underwent mood syncretism and cases where, instead of a full substitution, older counterfactual strategies were strengthened in use due to prescriptivist pressures (e.g. *were* in English). Also, I suggested that diachronic versions of Bible translations may supplement the synchronic snapshots on which previous work has been based, although space prevented me from providing a detailed diachronic examination at this moment. In sum, what I have sought to underline is that the life cycles of counterfactuals cannot be explained only with recourse to a general grammaticalization process, a single pragmatic motivation or a straightforward pull versus push chain.²² Rather, different diachronic processes and pragmatic motivations play a role in the genesis of each stage of the life cycle. The productivity and hence the developmental progress of counterfactuals is codetermined by systemic factors (e.g. the availability and productivity of alternative expressions

²² Reinöhl and Himmelman (2017) problematize pull- and push-chain explanations of forms of renewal because the causal factors behind the layering and developmental stages remain opaque.

in the system, mood syncretism, and analogical pressures) and social factors (e.g. the prestige of morphosyntactic patterns).

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Bidirectional cycles of indirectness in Mandarin

Yueh Hsin Kuo

8.1 Introduction

This chapter examines bidirectional cyclicity in the history of Mandarin (including Old Chinese). Cyclicity is understood broadly here as the phenomenon whereby one type of expression may develop into another one recurrently. This contrasts with the more restricted understanding of cyclicity whereby loss is one of the preconditions (e.g. Pons Bordería and Llopis 2020). That is, recurrent renewals without any wholesale replacement are assumed to constitute cyclicity in this chapter. Bidirectionality is defined as the phenomenon whereby one morphosyntactic type of expression may develop into another and vice versa (Kuo 2022a). Morphosyntax is assumed to be conceptual in nature (Langacker 2009a) and derived from constructions (Croft 2001).

While bidirectional changes that constitute the cyclical phenomena examined in this chapter have been dealt with separately under the notion of morphosyntactic vagueness (Kuo 2022a, 2024), it is proposed here that conventional indirectness (conventionalized ways of performing indirect speech acts; Blum-Kulka 1987) provides an overarching pragmatic explanation, assuming a usage-based, constructional perspective (e.g. Traugott and Trousdale 2013) where conventional indirectness may be specified at the level of constructions (Stefanowitsch 2003). Bidirectional cyclicity is hypothesized to be motivated by a diachronic preference for conventional indirectness, similar to Frajzyngier and Jirsa's (2006) 'Principle of Indirect Means', and to interact with morphosyntactic vagueness and low frequency. Such a preference leads to the selection of new items over old ones in the slot of a construction specified for conventional indirectness, as such new items, being less frequent, are perceived to be less direct. There are thus cycles of indirectness.

A schematic rhetorical pattern that characterizes the kind of conventional indirectness examined here is $Xp(\text{THEN})q$, where X stands for a modal or conditional protasis connective (henceforth conditional) and THEN is short for an optional apodosis connective, while p and q represent clauses. Specifically, p is an advice

clause and q is a goal clause. In using this rhetorical pattern, the speaker indirectly advises the addressee to carry out the act described by p in order to achieve the goal that q represents. Henceforth this pattern will be referred to as the advice–goal pattern. Four constructions will be shown to be variations on the pattern and to constitute critical contexts (Diewald 2002) where a modal develops into a conditional and vice versa. That is, bidirectional cyclical changes happen in the constructions and the advice–goal pattern characterizes the usages of the constructions as well as the changes.

This chapter is structured as follows. Section 8.2 introduces background notions such as constructions, morphosyntactic vagueness, and indirect speech-act constructions. Section 8.3 describes bidirectional cyclical changes between modal and conditional. Section 8.4 proposes that conventional indirectness specified at the level of constructions accounts for bidirectional cyclicity. Section 8.5 discusses the implications of the proposal for models of cyclicity, grammaticalization, and syntax. Section 8.6 concludes.

8.2 Background

Constructions are abstractions over linguistic usage events that users experience. They are defined as conventionalized form–meaning pairings that cannot be predicted on the basis of their components or other constructions (Goldberg 1995: 4; Hilpert 2014). That is, there is something idiosyncratic about them that suggests that they must be mentally represented as units.¹ A construction may be fully specified (e.g. a word like *cat*) or schematic (e.g. the ditransitive construction). A schematic slot in a construction represents an abstraction over items that may occur in that particular position. Schematic slots will be formalized using small caps and constructions will be represented using brackets. For example, the ditransitive construction may be represented as [SUBJECT VERB OBJECT₁ OBJECT₂].

Since constructions are descriptive and theoretical primitives in construction grammar, morphosyntactic categories are generalizations based on slots within constructions, especially in Croft’s (2001) Radical Construction Grammar. That is, morphosyntactic categories are defined by constructions. An item is a noun because it occurs in a slot that is defined as nominal on the basis of its function of reference (Croft 2001: ch. 2). The same item in a different slot may belong to a different morphosyntactic category. As underspecification is pervasive in use and structure (e.g. Langacker 2009b), constructions may have gradient properties (e.g. a slot may be more or less schematic). A specific kind of gradient is morphosyntactic vagueness (Kuo 2021, 2024), whereby an item or a slot, being partially underspecified, may be classified into more than one morphosyntactic category and yet no non-arbitrary decision about which category it

¹ Sufficient frequency may define constructions (Goldberg 2006), but it is not unproblematic to propose a frequency threshold for constructions (Goldberg 2019: 54).

is may be made. For example, *expert* in *expert advice* is vague between noun and adjective (Denison 2017), even though elsewhere it may be more specifically a noun or adjective. That is, multiple morphosyntactic analyses may be associated with an item or a slot, but their distinction may be neutralized and not at stake. For example, modals and conditionals in Mandarin are vague in some constructions (Kuo 2022a, 2024) because there is no distributional distinction between modal and conditional, and yet there are functional similarities between them to the extent that a modal may be interpreted as a conditional and vice versa. Such similarities are especially highlighted in analyses that treat conditionals as modal in nature, such as Van der Auwera (1985) and Kratzer (2012). For a review of how modals and conditionals resemble each other in formal semantics and cognitive semantics, see Kuo (2025).

That something may be vague between a modal and a conditional does not mean that there is no morphosyntactic distinction between them; Kuo (2022a, 2024) has considered distributional features that distinguish between them. For example, in a modalized protasis (e.g. *if you must*), one is sharply distinguished from the other. A particularly relevant one in this chapter is that in Mandarin conditionals may appear in pre-subject position, but modals only appear in post-subject position (Kuo 2024: 368–371). Therefore, if an item is pre-subject, it may only be a conditional. Nevertheless, contexts abound where such features are absent (e.g. null-subject contexts). See Kuo (2022a: 98–101) for more detailed descriptions of modal and conditional constructions in Mandarin. Diachronically, a slot that is morphosyntactically vague between modal and conditional is where change may happen in both directions: a modal in that slot may be reanalysed as a conditional and vice versa.

All the constructions to be described below are indirect speech-act constructions (Stefanowitsch 2003): they perform speech acts indirectly and conventionally. Specifically, they advise indirectly (no distinction between acts of advice, recommendation, and suggestion is assumed here). In using them the speaker has the hearer's best interest at heart and directs them to achieve their goal, following Searle's (1969: 67) definition of advice. They are indirect because by default modal and conditional expressions used performatively are indirect: they do not explicitly advise, but present advice as contingent upon certain conditions (e.g. Kuo 2025). That both modals and conditionals may be used performatively is one of the functional factors that enable them to be morphosyntactically vague.

8.3 Bidirectional changes

This section discusses bidirectional changes that originate from four constructions, previously described and analysed in Kuo (2022a, 2022b, 2024). Kuo's accounts have been synthesized here to present a coherent picture, with new

analysis of data from the Academia Sinica Corpus of Early Mandarin in [Sections 8.3.2](#) and [8.3.3](#). The periodization of (Mandarin) Chinese adopted here follows that of the Academia Sinica Corpora. The diachronically earlier use of an item will be presented first, followed by the construction where the change originates.

8.3.1 Bì

In Old Chinese (eighth to first century BCE), *bì* may express various senses, including necessity modality ‘must’, as in (1).

(1) 必告父母

bì *gào* *Fùmǔ*
must tell parents

‘One must tell one’s parents.’

(*Shījīng*, seventh century BCE)

The modal sense gives rise to a conditional sense ‘only if’ ([Kuo 2022b](#): 86–87). The critical context is [*bì p* THEN *q*] ‘must *p*, (and) then *q*’, where *bì* is a modal of advisability and THEN represents an apodosis connective ‘(and) then’. It is a construction according to [Kuo \(2020: 105–106\)](#) because its distribution is somewhat restricted, being typically used by politicians to give solicited advice; it does not seem to be used to give unsolicited advice.

For example, the addressee in (2) is looking for advice on how to settle a dispute. The speaker says (2), where *p* advises the addressee on what to do in order to achieve *q* ‘take action on the matter’. The *p* clause is thus an advice clause and the *q* clause a goal clause.

(2) (吾聞國家有大事,)必順於典刑,而訪諮於耆老,而後行之

(*wú* *wén* *guójiā* *yǒu* *dà* *shì*) *bì* *shùn* *yú*
I hear country there.is great matter must follow at
diǎnxíng *ér* *fǎngzī* *yú* *gǒulǎo* *ér* *hòu*
penal.code and consult at old.venerable and afterwards
xíng *zhī*
undertake It

(a) ‘(I heard that when there is a serious matter in the country,) one must follow the penal code and consult the old and venerable, and then one can take action (on the matter).’

(b) ‘Only if one follows ... can one take action.’

(*Guóyǔ*, fifth to fourth century BCE)

Similarly, the addressee in (3), wanting to employ more virtuous men, asks the speaker how to achieve it. The speaker responds that they must do *p* ‘enrich ... all virtuous men’ to achieve *q* ‘increase their number’.

(3) 亦必且富之貴之, 敬之譽之, 然後國之良士, 亦將可得而眾也

yì	bì	qiě	fù	zhī	guì	zhī	jìng	zhī
also	must	altogether	enrich	them	value	them	respect	them
yù	zhī	ránhòu	guó	zhī	liáng	shì	yì	jiāng
honour	them	then	county	poss	good	man	also	will
kě	dé	ér	zhòng	yě				
can	get	and	multiply	FP				

(a) ‘Also, you must enrich, value, respect, and honor all virtuous men and then you will be able to employ them and increase their number (in your service)’.

(b) ‘Only if you also enrich ... them
can you increase their number’.

(Mòzǐ, fifth to third century BCE)

Two interpretations are provided in each of the examples. The (a) readings are the original modal ones (‘must ... and then’) and the (b) ones reflect inferences (‘only if ...’), in the sense of invited inferencing (Traugott and Dasher 2002). Pragmatically, the inferences are possible because they carry out the same performative tasks as the originals: they indirectly advise the addressee to do *p* to achieve *q*, which is contextually the addressee’s goal. Morphosyntactically, the inferences are possible because no modal-specific or conditional-specific morphosyntax dictates the categorization of *bì* in [*bì p THEN q*]. In short, the relationship between *p* and *q* in the construction may be construed modally or conditionally and *bì* may be categorized as a modal or a conditional.

Evidence for conditional *bì* comes from examples where *bì* appears in pre-subject position, as in (4), which is attested later than its modal use. Other modal flavours of *bì* (e.g. epistemic modality) may also lead to conditional *bì*, but [*bì p THEN q*], where *bì* is a modal of advisability, is the most typical context where *bì* invites inferences of ‘only if’ (Kuo 2022b: 99–101).²

(4) 必壤地美, 然後草木碩大

bì	rǎngdì	měi	ránhòu	cǎomù	shuòdà
only.if	farmland	beautiful	then	vegetation	great

‘Only if the farmland is fertile will the vegetation thrive.’

(Hánfēizǐ, third century BCE)

² There does not seem to be any instance where *bì* (or any of the items to be described below) is used simultaneously as a modal and a conditional in the same clause. I am grateful to Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen for bringing this possibility to my attention.

8.3.2 Xū

In Early Mandarin (7th to 19th century CE), *xū* is a necessity modal, as illustrated in (5).

(5) 汝須自看

rǔ xū zì kàn
you must self look

‘You must look at it yourself.’

(*Zǔtángjǐ*, 10th century)

Similar to *bì*, *xū* ‘must’ undergoes a process whereby its advisory, modal use develops into a conditional use. The critical context is [*xū p shǐ dé*] ‘must *p*, only then is it possible’. It is a construction because its directive function is non-predictable; neither [*xū p*] nor [*p shǐ dé*] has the same directive function (Kuo 2022a: 105–108). Similar to [*bì p THEN q*], the *p* clause in [*xū p shǐ dé*] is modalized as necessary for the accomplishment of the goal clause *q* and performatively represented as the advised act. *Shǐ* ‘only then’ is an apodosis connective. The *q* clause, different from that of [*bì p THEN q*], is lexically specific, represented solely by *dé*. *Dé* carries a myriad of meanings (Sun 1999: 144), of which ‘(be) possible’, ‘can’, and ‘obtain’ are available in [*xū p shǐ dé*]. Despite not being as open-ended as *q* in [*bì p THEN q*], *dé* is also a goal clause, contextually. In using [*xū p shǐ dé*], the speaker advises the addressee to do *p* and specifies that only doing *p* would result in the possibility or obtainability of the goal.

For example, (6) and (7) are Zen masters’ responses to their disciples’ questions. Both may be interpreted as advice and *dé* pertains to the goals that their questions are about.

(6) 汝須禮拜始得

rǔ xū lǐbài shǐ dé
you must worship only.then possible

(a) ‘You must worship; only then is it possible.’

(b) ‘Only if you worship is it possible.’

(*Zǔtángjǐ*, 10th century)

(7) 須運鋤始得

xū yùn jīn shǐ dé
must move axe only.then possible

(a) ‘You must use an axe; only then is it possible.’

(b) ‘Only if you use an axe is it possible.’

(*Zǔtángjǐ*, 10th century)

The (a) readings are the original modal ones, while (b) reflect inferences where *xū* is a conditional. The same reasoning about why *bì* in [*bì p THEN q*] may be

interpreted either way applies to *xū* in [*xū p shǐ dé*]. Formally, the distinction between modal and conditional is not specified. Pragmatically, the act of advice may be understood modally or conditionally.

Evidence for conditional *xū* comes from examples such as (8), where *xū* is in pre-subject position. Note the parallel with the following conditional sentence headed by the canonical conditional *ruò* ‘if’.

- (8) ... 須冰盡合, 乃渡(若聞冰下猶有水聲, 則終不敢渡 ...)

xū bīng jìn hé nǎi dù (ruò wén ...)
only.if ice completely join only.then cross if hear

‘Only if the ice is completely frozen will the fox cross the river (and if it hears water under the ice, it will not dare to cross).’ (Zhūzǐ Yǔlèi, 1270)

Finally, Kuo (2022a: 106) mentions in passing that other modals may precede *p shǐ dé*, such as 須得 *xūděi* and 須索 *xūsuǒ*, near-synonyms of *xū* ‘must’, although less frequently than *xū*.³ In the texts considered by Kuo (2022a), there are 24 instances of *xū*, but only two of *xūděi* and one of *xūsuǒ*. Therefore, we may posit a construction with a somewhat schematic slot *xū*: [*xū p shǐ dé*]. What Kuo (2022a) does not discuss is that *xūděi* also likely develops into a conditional from [*xū p shǐ dé*], though later than *xū*. (9) shows *xūděi* in [*xū p shǐ dé*], where the following conditional sentence renders a conditional interpretation of *xūděi* more likely. (10) shows *xūděi* as a conditional. Note that the speaker is a strategist advising the addressee.

- (9) 是你諸人著力, 須得趁著始得; 若不趁著, 喪身失命

shì nǐ zhū rén zhuó lì xūděi chèn zhe shǐ
be you many people exert must take.advantage only.then
dé ruò bù chèn zhe sàng shēn shī mìng
possible If not take.advantage lose body lose life

(a) ‘(Even if) it is that you people try your best, you must make good use of the opportunity; only then is it possible; if you do not, you will lose your lives.’

(b) ‘(Even if) ... only if you make ... is it possible ...’

(Zǔtángjī, 10th century)

³ 須得 may be read as *xūděi* or *xūdē*. It is not always clear which reading is intended, given the opacity of diachronic data. Anderl (2004: 413–416), for example, transliterates 須得 inconsistently into *xūděi* and *xūdē*. 得 has a complex history, which will not be dealt with here; see Sun (1999: ch. 5), Ziegeler (2004), and Kuo (2020: ch. 5.4.5).

- (10) 須得兩箇頭領做細作, 先去打探山川形勢, 方可進兵

xūděi liǎng gè tóulǐng zuò xìzuò xiān qù dǎtàn
 only.if two CLF leader act spy first go enquire

shānchuān xíngshì fāng kě jìn bīng
 landscape terrain only.then may send troop

‘Only if two squad leaders first conduct reconnaissance of the terrain may you send in the troops.’
 (Shuǐhǔzhuàn, 14th century)

8.3.3 *Xūshì* and *chúfēi*

Originally, *xūshì* ‘must’ was a modal expression meaning ‘must be’; *xū* in *xūshì* is the same *xū* discussed above. The development of *xūshì* into a conditional is assumed here to originate from its modal use ‘must’, as in (11), in order to streamline the discussion. But a multiple-source scenario is also possible: *xūshì* ‘must’ > ‘only if’ and *xū* ‘only if’ + *shì* ‘be’ > *xūshì* ‘only if’ (Kuo 2024: 388).

- (11) 欲得世上榮, 須是今生修福

yù dé shìshàng róng xūshì jīn heng xiūfú
 want get worldly glory must this life do.good

‘If you want to obtain worldly glory, you must do good this lifetime.’
 (Dūnhuáng biànwén, 7th to 10th century)

The history of *xūshì* and that of *chúfēi* are almost mirror images. *Chúfēi* ‘only if; unless’, as in (12), develops into a modal ‘must’ via the same construction as *xūshì*.

- (12) 除非聽受法花經, 如此災殃方得出

chúfēi tīngshòu fǎhuā jīng rúcǐ zāiyāng
 only.if obey.by.listening fǎhuā scripture this.way disaster

fāng dé chū
 only.then possible exit

‘Only if you follow the *Fǎhuā* scripture is it possible to avoid disasters.’
 (Dūnhuáng biànwén, 7th to 10th century)

This subsection is structured as follows. Section 8.3.3.1 describes the construction where *xūshì* and *chúfēi* begin to develop into a conditional and a modal respectively. Section 8.3.3.2 presents the outcomes of the changes.

8.3.3.1 The tricausal construction

The construction, labelled as the tricausal construction, is formalized as [IF WANT q_1 X p THEN q_2] ‘if you want q_1 you must p ; (only) then can you q_2 ’. IF is an optional

conditional (the conditional protasis may be zero-marked in general). WANT is a verb of desire. The q_1 clause is a goal clause (note that it is the complement of WANT). X may be a modal or a conditional: the slot is morphosyntactically vague between modal and conditional. The p clause is an advice clause. THEN is an apodosis connective meaning '(only) then.' The q_2 clause is a goal clause referring to the same goal as q_1 . It anaphorically refers to q_1 through a combination of strategies. First, it may contain a possibility modal, not unlike *dé* in [*xū p shǐ dé*], that pertains to q_1 . Second, it may recycle a lexical item from q_1 . Finally, both strategies may be employed: both q_1 and q_2 may contain the same possibility modal or q_2 may contain a possibility modal and an item recycled from q_1 .

For example, q_2 in (13) shares the possibility modal *dé* and the lexical item *duàn* 'ascertain' with q_1 . Similarly, q_2 in (14) shares *dé* and *dǎ* 'attack' with q_1 . The X slot is filled by what is usually a conditional, *chúfēi*, in (13), and a modal, *xū*, in (14). The (a) readings are where the item in the X slot is interpreted as a modal. The (b) readings are where the same item is interpreted as a conditional. The slot may be interpreted as modal or conditional because the distinction is not specified and both interpretations may perform the act of advice.

- (13) 若要[斷得清楚, 揲著也不大明白] q_1 , 除非[用大六壬] p 才[斷得準] q_2

ruò yào [duàn dé qīngchǔ diéshī yě bù
if want ascertain possible clear diéshī also not
dà míngbái] q_1 chúfēi [yòng dàliùrén] p cái [duàn
greatly understand only.if use dàliùrén only.then ascertain
dé zhǔn] q_2
possible accurate

(a) 'If you want to [interpret what this sign means and do not understand *Diéshī* (a method of divination)] q_1 , you [must use *Dàliùrén* (another method of divination)] p ; only then [can you accurately interpret it] q_2 .'

(b) 'If ... only if you ... can you ...'. (Hónglóumèng, 1791)

- (14) 若要[打青州] q_1 , 須[用大隊軍馬] p 方[可打得] q_2

ruò yào [dǎ qīngzhōu] q_1 xū [yòng dà duì jūn
if want attack qīngzhōu must use great troop army
mǎ] p fāng [kě dǎ dé] q_2
horse only.then can attack possible

(a) 'If you want to [attack *Qīngzhōu*] q_1 , you must [use a great many troops] p ; only then [can you succeed in attacking] q_2 .'

(b) 'If ... only if ... can you ...'. (Shuǐhǔzhuàn, 14th century)

The function of q_2 is to emphasize that doing p will result in the accomplishment of the goal q_1 . Such an emphasis carries a certain degree of redundancy, as q_1 and q_2 refer to the same thing. We do find examples where users do not shy away from this redundancy, as in (15), where q_1 and q_2 contain almost only *nèndì* ‘so’.

(15) 要[得恁地] q_1 , 須[是平日莊敬工夫到此] p , 方[能恁地] q_2

yào [dé nèndì] q_1 xū [shì píngrì zhuāngjìng
want get so must be habitual respect

gōngfū dào cǐ] p Fāng [néng nèndì] q_2
kungfu arrive this only.then can so

(a) ‘If you want to [get it] q_1 , it must [be the case that your daily *zhuāngjìng* *Kungfu* (the way one conducts oneself) has reached a certain level] p ; only then [can you get it] q_2 .’

(b) ‘If ... only if your daily ... can you ...’ (Zhūzǐ Yǔlèi, 1270)

One may argue that the tricausal pattern is not a construction but a concatenation of multiple clauses, parsed as either ‘if ... must ... then ...’ or ‘if ... only if ... then ...’. The emphatic function of q_2 and lexical similarity between q_1 and q_2 could then be derived from elsewhere (rather than posited as internal to the construction). This analysis is plausible for Old Chinese and Present-Day Mandarin, where the pattern is rare (Kuo 2024: 373). However, there is statistical evidence that in Early Mandarin q_1 and q_2 are more likely to be at least partially lexically identical (i.e. share at least one lexical item) than their counterparts are in similar sequences. That is, compared to q_x and q_z in sequences such as WANT q_x X p_y THEN q_z and WANT q_x THEN q_z that are not the tricausal pattern, q_1 and q_2 are more likely to be partially identical (using a Fisher’s exact test, respectively, $p = 0.011$, $\phi = 0.392$ and $p = 0.002$, $\phi = 0.185$). This suggests that the tricausal pattern in Early Mandarin is a construction: the lexical similarity observed between q_1 and q_2 is a functional characteristic of the pattern and not predictable from similar sequences (Kuo 2024: 381–382).

The parallel between the tricausal construction and the other two constructions is as follows. In all three, the p clauses are what the speaker advises, while the q clauses are (what the speaker represents as) the addressee’s goal and the relationship between p and q may be understood modally or conditionally. If there is a topic in front of the other two constructions, [*bì* p THEN q] and [*xū* p *shǐ dé*], the overall meaning approximates that of the tricausal construction whose first clause is a topic (as conditionals are topics; Haiman 1978). (2) and (16) are such examples. In (2), the topic clause is ‘I heard that ...’. In (16), *fū* introduces the topic ‘Those who follow *Cānxué* ...’.

(16) 夫參學者, 須透過祖佛始得

fū cānxué zhě xū tòuguò zǔfó shǐ dé
 TOP cānxué NOML must go.through zǔfó only.then possible

(a) 'Those who follow *Cānxué* (a Buddhist way of learning), they must go through *Zǔfó*; only then is it possible (to get *Cānxué*).'.

(b) 'Those ... only if they ... is it possible ...?' (*Zútángjī*, 10th century)

8.3.3.2 The changes

The earliest examples of *xūshì* and *chúfēi* in the X slot of the tricausal construction are in (17) and (18).

(17) 若要[可行]_{q1}, 須是[酌古之制, 去其重複, 使之簡易]_p, 然後[可]_{q2}

ruò yào [kě xíng]_{q1} xūshì [zhuó gǔ zhī zhì
 if want can work must consider antiquity poss rule
 qù qí chóngfù shǐ zhī jiǎnyì]_p ránhòu [kě]_{q2}
 remove its repetition make it simple then possible

(a) 'If you want it to [work]_{q1}, you must [consider the rules from antiquity and simplify them]_p; then [it is possible (for it to work)]_{q2}'.

(b) 'If ... only if you consider ... is it possible.' (*Zhūzǐ Yǔlèi*, 1270)

(18) 若要[做見幾而諫]_{q1}, 除非[就本文添一兩字]_p 始[得]_{q2}

ruò yào [zuò jiàn jī ér jiàn]_{q1} chúfēi [jiù
 if want take see chance and remonstrate only.if to
 běn wén tiān yì liǎng zì]_p shǐ [dé]_{q2}
 original text add one two word only.then possible

(a) 'If you want to [take it to mean that one should remonstrate when there is a chance]_{q1}, you must [add one or two words to the original text]_p; only then [is it possible (to derive the meaning)]_{q2}'.

(b) 'If ... only if you add ... is it possible.' (*Zhūzǐ Yǔlèi*, 1270)

As conditional uses of *xūshì* and modal uses of *chúfēi* are found only after they occur in the X slot, it is hypothesized that conditional *xūshì* and modal *chúfēi* originate from the slot.

At the time of (17)–(18), as *xūshì* has not become a conditional, a non-usage-based approach to morphosyntax would categorize *xūshì* as a modal, in keeping with its distribution as a modal outside the tricausal construction. Similarly, *chúfēi*, not yet a modal, would be categorized as a conditional, since it is a conditional outside the tricausal construction. However, the usage-based constructional approach allows us to recognize the X slot as vague and thus to avoid the

somewhat arbitrary categorization of an item in the X slot as modal or conditional on the basis of its distribution outside the slot. Such a categorization is non-usage-based as it disrupts the internal composition of the construction by dividing the slot into two types, using evidence from other constructions.

Evidence for conditional *xūshì* comes from examples where it is pre-subject, as in (19).

(19) 須是我同到浙江去纔得明白

xūshì wǒ tóng dào zhèjiāng qù cái dé
 only.if I together arrive zhèjiāng go only.then possible
míngbái
 clear

‘Only if I go to Zhèjiāng with you can we get to the bottom of it’.

(*Rúlín wàishǐ*, 1750)

Evidence for modal *chúfēi* comes from its occurrence in the MODAL slot of what is known as the anankastic conditional construction, [IF WANT *q* MODAL *p*] ‘if you want *q*, you must/should *p*’, where MODAL is a main-clause modal that marks *p* as the necessary precondition for *q* and as the means through which *q* is realized (Condoravdi and Lauer 2016). The anankastic conditional construction typically has advisory uses. Similar to the other constructions described so far, its *p* clause is an advice clause and its *q* clause, being the complement of a verb of desire, is a goal clause. An example of modal *chúfēi* is in (20), where *chúfēi*, being in the MODAL slot of the main clause, cannot be a conditional. (11) is also an instance of the anankastic conditional construction, where *xūshì* occurs in the MODAL slot.

(20) 若要知他端的, 除非問他莊客

ruò yào zhī tā duāndì chúfēi wèn tā zhuāngkè
 if want know his intelligence must ask his tenant

‘If you want to gather intelligence on him, you must ask his tenants’.

(*Shuihǔzhuàn*, 14th century)

Interestingly, before conditional *xūshì* and modal *chúfēi* develop, modal *xūshì* has advisory uses in the anankastic conditional construction, as in (11). Conditional *chúfēi* is also used to advise, as in (12). Their histories thus resemble each other: conditional *chúfēi* > tricausal *chúfēi* > modal *chúfēi* in the anankastic conditional and modal *xūshì* in the anankastic conditional > tricausal *xūshì* > conditional *xūshì* (Kuo 2024: 390).

Finally, the X slot allows more than *xūshì* and *chúfēi* in Early Mandarin. *Xū* and *bì* (the same one as discussed in Section 8.3.1) are also possible. In the dataset

considered by Kuo (2024), there are 15 instances of *xū*, fewer than 14 of *xūshì*, two of *bì*, and one of *chúfēi*.⁴ See also Kuo (2024: 381) for the distributions of the other slots. Note that even though *bì* developed into a conditional in Old Chinese, modal *bì* dominates the entire history of (Mandarin) Chinese and in Early Mandarin its conditional uses are likely relatively marginal. It is plausible that modal *bì* could have developed into a conditional again via the tricausal construction like *xūshì*.

8.3.4 *Fēi*

Originally a negative copula ‘be not’, *fēi* may also function as a conditional ‘only if; unless’ (Eifring 1995: 254; Pulleyblank 1995: 154), as in (21).

(21) 非盡族是天下不安

fēi jìn zú shì tiān xià bù ān
 unless complete exterminate this heaven under not peaceful
 ‘Unless one completely exterminates these people’s clans, the world under
 heaven will not be peaceful.’ (Shǐjì, ca. 145–85 BCE; Eifring 1995: 257)

It develops into a modal from [*fēi p bù kě*] ‘unless *p* it is not possible; only if *p* is it possible.’ [*fēi p bù kě*] is a construction, according to Hong and Dong (2004), as despite its biclausal form, it is interpreted as having only one predicate (namely *p*) and the *q* clause is typically the invariant *bù kě* ‘not possible’. Hong and Dong (2004) note that [*fēi p bù kě*] is used deontically and directly. Based on Kuo’s (2022a) data, the advisory use of [*fēi p bù kě*] is prominent in the inferencing of *fēi* as modal and unsurprisingly, there is no modal-specific or conditional-specific morphosyntax around *fēi* in cases where it can be read as a modal. In [*fēi p bù kě*], the *q* clause is also a sort of goal, but a negative kind, as it refers to the impossibility of the goal (Kuo 2025). Performatively, it works in tandem with the negative prosody of *fēi* ‘unless’ to reinforce the idea that one should do *p* or the goal would be impossible to achieve. More specifically, in Dancygier’s (1998) analysis, *unless p, q* asserts *q* on the condition that *only if p, ~q*. Assuming this analysis for [*fēi p bù kě*] ‘unless *p*, the goal is not possible’, we obtain the following paraphrase: ‘the goal is not possible; only if *p* is it possible’, whose implicature is: ‘do *p*; (or) the goal is impossible’.

For example, the addressee in (22) asks the speaker what books they should read. Contextually, reading good books is presumably the goal and [*fēi p bù kě*] is

⁴ *Xūshì* may be segmented into *xū shì*. As there are 14 instances of the orthographic sequence, *xū* + *shì*, there are fewer than 14 instances of *xūshì*.

understood as ‘the goal is not possible; only if reading the books is it possible.’ *Fēi* in this construction is vague. Whether read conditionally, as in (22a), or modally, as in (22b), the construction advises reading the books.

(22) 若孟子詩書等，非讀不可

ruò mèngzǐ shī shū děng fēi dú bù kě
like mèngzǐ shī shū so.on unless read not possible

(a) ‘Books such as *Mèngzǐ*, *Shī*, and *Shū*, unless one reads them, it is not possible.’

(b) ‘Books ... one must read them (or it is not possible; it will not do).’ (Zhūzǐ Yǔlèi, 1270)

Similarly, the speaker in (23) explicitly supposes the addressee’s goal, ‘reinstate the *Xīfēng* reform’ and says ‘the goal is not possible; only if appointing *Cài Jīng* is it possible.’ Whether read conditionally or modally, (23) advises the addressee to appoint *Cài Jīng*.

(23) 陛下若欲紹述熙豐之政，非用蔡京為政不可

bìxià ruò yù shàoshù xīfēng zhī zhèng fēi yòng
lord if want inherit xīfēng poss politics unless use

cài jīng wéi zhèng Bù kě
cài jīng do politics not possible

(a) ‘If my lord wants to reinstate the *Xīfēng* reform, unless he appoints *Cài Jīng* as an official, it is not possible.’

(b) ‘If my lord ... he must appoint ... (or it is not possible; it will not do).’ (Zhūzǐ Yǔlèi, 1270)

(23) resembles the tricausal construction. It is not considered as one in Kuo (2024), as the q_2 clause in the tricausal construction does not include a negator, whereas the final clause *bù kě* in (23) does. One could also argue that, following Hong and Dong (2004), *bù kě* is not a (full-blown) clause; rather, it is more like an epistemic modifier (Kuo 2020: 134–135), similar to sentence-final *I think* (Thompson and Mulac 1991). If it is not a clause, (23), being biclausal, cannot be an instance of the tricausal construction.

Evidence for modal *fēi* comes from examples where it functions as a main-clause modal and occurs without *bù kě*, as in (24). Additionally, Wiedenhof (2015: 335–336) observes that in Present-Day Mandarin modal *fēi* may form disyllabic modal expressions with other necessity modals, such as *fēiděi* ‘must’ (< *děi* ‘must’) and *fēiyào* ‘have to’ (< *yào* ‘have to’).

(24) 你不讓我去, 我非去

nǐ bù rang wǒ qù wǒ fēi qù
 you not let I go I must go

‘You don’t let me go, (so) I must go.’ (Xiàndài Hànyǔ Cídiǎn, 2016)

8.4 Conventional indirectness motivates bidirectional cyclicity

The constructions described in [Section 8.3](#) are variations on the advice–goal pattern: *p* is what the speaker advises the addressee to do to achieve their goal, represented by *q*. The pattern is not likely to be a construction. The constructions are so formally diverse that it is not very plausible that speakers abstract over them to form the advice–goal pattern. There is also a growing literature arguing that high-level generalizations are perhaps not cognitively plausible (e.g. [Sommerer and Baumann 2021](#)).⁵ However, the pattern is a valid functional, onomasiological generalization insofar as it captures how advice may be given. Users are likely aware of the fact that in producing or processing advice, a clause may be represented as the advised act, in combination with another clause that expresses the goal that the advised act helps to accomplish.

Morphosyntactically, bidirectional cyclicity is enabled by the fact that the slots immediately before the *p* clauses are not morphosyntactically specified as modal or conditional. This vagueness or underspecification is motivated by functional similarities between modal and conditional ([Section 8.2](#)).⁶ The most important similarity is probably that both modals and conditionals may be used to perform the same act. That is, they may be performatively equivalent ([Kuo 2022a, 2024](#)) or, in other words, (approximately) the same way of realizing the advice–goal pattern.

While [Kuo \(2021, 2022a, 2024\)](#) highlights the importance of morphosyntactic vagueness in change, how bidirectional cyclicity comes about has not been fully explored. It is proposed here that conventional indirectness specified at the level of the constructions provides an overarching, coherent functional and diachronic perspective; see [Kuo \(2024: 382\)](#) for a passing mention of this idea.

⁵ Not until I started working on the chapter did I realize that the advice–goal pattern could be proposed on the basis of the constructions, despite having worked with the data for some time and recognized that the constructions were functionally similar. This is anecdotal evidence, but if someone who possesses metalinguistic knowledge cannot easily recognize the pattern, it is not likely that ordinary users can.

⁶ The cyclical changes have not been characterized in terms of semasiological and onomasiological cycles ([Hansen 2018a, 2020b](#)) here. These notions are based on the distinction between content-level and context-level meanings ([Hansen 2008](#)), while the focus here is on changes between modal and conditional, which cannot be easily construed as movement from content-level to context-level, especially considering the significant functional overlap between modal and conditional ([Kuo 2025](#)).

Functionally, such a construction-level specification obviates the need for any morphosyntactic specification or differentiation at the slot level. That is, if a construction is specified as an indirect speech act of advice, or if one can perform or understand a piece of advice reliably through the use of such a construction, then there is no need to specify the morphosyntactic status of one of the slots as either modal or conditional, when both modals and conditionals may perform the same act. The construction-level specification of conventional indirectness therefore provides an economic motivation for morphosyntactic vagueness: what is already specified at the constructional level need not be specified at the slot level. This proposal is particularly at home in a usage-based framework like Radical Construction Grammar (Croft 2001), where crosslinguistic categories such as noun, verb, and adjective are defined in terms of speech acts of reference, predication, and modification.

Diachronically, conventional indirectness at the constructional level interacts with low frequency and morphosyntactic vagueness in driving bidirectional cyclicity in the following ways. First, frequently used indirect acts may become direct acts (Frajzyngier and Jirsa 2006; Mauri and Sansò 2011) because recurrent uses may strongly associate indirect acts with the illocutionary force that they are intended to express. Performative items that are used more frequently therefore may come across as more direct than items not used as frequently. If conventional indirectness is specified as a property of a construction, then there may be a diachronic preference for newer, less frequent items in the construction, as such items may be perceived as less direct, provided they resemble old items to the extent that they can still be considered as conventional. For example, *xū* 'must' develops into a conditional from [*xū p shǐ dé*] as the most frequent and supposedly conventional slot-filler. The other two fillers, much less frequent than *xū*, formally resemble it: *xūděi* and *xūsǔo* 'must', the first of which also develops into a conditional later (Section 8.3.2). Similarly, the most frequent and conventional item in the X slot of the tricausal construction is *xū*, while the less frequent ones are morphologically similar (*xūshì*) or have previous advisory uses (*bì* and *chúfēi*). *Xūshì* and *chúfēi* develop into a conditional and a modal respectively, while *bì* may also be developing into a conditional again (Section 8.3.3). That is, users do not randomly choose new slot-fillers but select those that resemble what is conventional. This is a kind of analogy: new items are selected because, in addition to being more indirect, they are similar to older ones.

Second, the items under investigation here, compared to canonical modals and conditionals, are less frequent and most of their new conditional and modal uses are short-lived and not well established. For example, the historical dictionary compiled by the Taiwan Ministry of Education, *Zhōngbiān guóyǔ cídiǎn xiūdìng-běn*, contains no conditional entry for *xū*, *xūshì*, or *xūděi* and no modal entry for *chúfēi* or *fēi*. Their low frequency and relative marginal statuses are interpreted

as correlated with morphosyntactic vagueness (Kuo 2024: 390): low-frequency items tend to have weaker, vaguer mental representations because they are not as entrenched as high-frequency ones (e.g. Bybee 2010: ch. 4). On the basis of this assumption, we may hypothesize that the preference for conventional indirectness, and thus low-frequency items in indirect speech-act constructions, may prevent them from being used frequently and acquiring stronger, more distinctive mental representations. The correlation between low frequency and morphosyntactic vagueness therefore also follows from conventional indirectness. It encourages the selection of low-frequency items for their indirectness but discourages their increase in frequency and entrenchment, which would render them more direct.

The proposal that a diachronic preference for conventional indirectness at the constructional level motivates bidirectional cyclicity has an intellectual forebear: Frajzyngier and Jirsa's (2006: 513) 'Principle of Indirect Means', 'according to which indirect rather than direct means of expression are used whenever the goals of speech involve certain functional domains'. Such domains may vary from culture to culture, but when it comes to the domain of directive acts, including acts of advice, politeness is typically at play: all else being equal, a conventional indirect act is more polite than a direct one.⁷ The Principle of Indirect Means is proposed to be a significant factor in language change:

As conventional means of expression, through repeated use, become associated directly with a semantic domain, speakers seek out less direct means of expression. The new means of expression becomes conventionalized over time, becomes a direct means of expression, and needs in turn to be replaced. This process creates a major motivating force for grammaticalization and results in a richness of means of expression in the domains to which the Principle of Indirect Means applies. (Frajzyngier and Jirsa 2006: 539)

Relatedly, Devos and Van Olmen (2013) have also suggested that politeness may play a role in change involving directive acts.

The Principle of Indirect Means and the proposal presented here suggest that there are cycles of indirectness. A newer, less frequent item may be selected preferentially to perform an indirect act (i.e. fill in the slot of an indirect speech-act construction) for its perceived indirectness, provided that it resembles items used conventionally for the same act. An older, more frequent item may be dispreferred, as it is perceived to be too direct. Frajzyngier and Jirsa (2006: 527) also observe that cycles of deontic expressions may be driven by indirectness, which the data presented here also seem to be. In fact, on the basis of *xū*, *xūshì*, and *xūděi*, we may further hypothesize that disyllabic deontic expressions in Mandarin result from

⁷ The keyword is *conventional* here. A non-conventional act may be more indirect but less polite than a conventional one. In Blum-Kulka's (1987) experiments, a non-conventional request to clean up the kitchen like *You've left the kitchen in a right mess* was rated more indirect but less polite than a conventional request like *Could you clean up the mess in the kitchen?*

such cycles, including *fēi*, *fēiděi*, and *fēiyào* ‘must’ (Section 8.3.4): such disyllabic forms are selected for their relative indirectness and resemblance to their more direct and conventional monosyllabic counterparts. Similarly, LaBarge (2016) suggests that the cycle involving the Mandarin verbs of desire *yào* and *xiǎngyào* ‘want’ may be associated with indirectness (however, he regards indirectness as epiphenomenal from a generative perspective).

The proposal differs from the Principle of Indirect Means in that it reinterprets the principle in terms of construction grammar and puts it on a firmer diachronic, empirical basis, by drawing on diachronic corpus data, whereas Frajzyngier and Jirsa’s diachronic postulation of the principle is not explicitly couched in construction grammar and considers relatively few diachronic data, especially with respect to deontic modality (Frajzyngier and Jirsa 2006: 527–528). However, the constructions and their slot-fillers are sparsely distributed in the corpora used in this chapter, which are not particularly large. Therefore, the proposal could be refined by more data, which may provide a more fine-grained perspective on when an item becomes (dis)preferred, as well as a variationist perspective on which social groups tend to start preferring newer items. Furthermore, the proposal focuses on filler–slot relations. An alternative is to consider intra-constructional relations (e.g. De Smet et al. 2018; Traugott 2020), by asking, for example, under what conditions one indirect speech-act construction may be preferred over another.

8.5 Discussion

This section reconsiders the definition of cyclicity (Section 8.5.1) and discusses the implications for Detges’s (2020) satellite model of cyclicity (Section 8.5.2), grammaticalization, and models of syntax (Section 8.5.3).

8.5.1 Cyclicity reconsidered

Cyclicity is defined loosely here. A more restricted definition would not consider the changes as cyclic, as none of the outcomes has become canonical or fully replaced anything. For example, for Pons Bordería and Llopis (2020: 340), ‘cycles ... are defined by a take-and-release strategy whereby an element acquires a new function while some element simultaneously loses an old one’.

However, a restricted definition would exclude many phenomena in Mandarin from the discussion of cyclicity. Mandarin is known for its numerous doublets, disyllabic words composed of two morphemes, at least one of which, the monosyllabic origin, is nearly synonymous with the whole word (e.g. *xū*, *xūshì*, and *xūděi* ‘must; only if’, *fēi*, *fēiděi*, and *fēiyào* ‘must’, and *yào* and *xiǎngyào* ‘want’). The diachronic process leading to the preponderance of disyllabic words in Mandarin (whereas Old Chinese is more monosyllabic) is known as disyllabification, one of

the most researched and debated topics in the history of Chinese (e.g. [Sampson 2019](#)). Interestingly, the monosyllabic origin of a disyllabic word often coexists with the disyllabic word, which makes phenomena of disyllabification fall outside a restricted understanding of cyclicity. But a significant number of such words are likely to be the results of cycles broadly construed, such as disyllabic deontic expressions in Mandarin ([Section 8.4](#)). *Xū*, *xūshì*, and *xūděi* ‘must; only if’ are a case in point: *Xū* is the monosyllabic origin and the other two are doublets that by hypothesis result from a cycle of indirectness. A broad definition of cyclicity is thus worth adopting as it may encourage cross-fertilization of data and analysis between Chinese linguistics and historical linguistics in general.

8.5.2 The satellite model of cyclicity

Assuming the bidirectional cycles as processes of grammaticalization, the analysis presented here suggests that bidirectional cyclicity, just like many instances of grammaticalization, results from rhetorical language uses ([Detges 2004](#); [Waltereit 2012](#)), or ‘speakers’ creativity in finding solutions for a certain type of recurrent communicative problem’ ([Detges 2020](#): 301). How to communicate the advice–goal pattern indirectly and yet also efficiently and conventionally is the communicative problem in our case.

The analysis also resembles the satellite model by [Koch and Oesterreicher \(1996\)](#), as summarized and further detailed in [Detges \(2020\)](#) to account for cyclicity. In this model, non-canonical forms are known as satellites, which enter into competition with canonical forms as a way of enhancing pragmatic efficiency. Specifically, users may select satellites over canonical forms for their marked pragmatic properties in order to achieve communicative goals. This is interpreted as what leads to the abundance of functionally similar markers: communicative needs motivate the selection of new satellites. This is also likely what results in many similar disyllabic forms in Mandarin and the ‘richness of means of expression in the domains to which the Principle of Indirect Means applies’ that [Frajzyngier and Jirsa \(2006](#): 539) refer to. On the basis of his data, [Detges \(2020](#): 306) remarks that ‘the eventual replacement of the canonical form by a satellite’ is rare and ‘much more change is going on at the level of the satellites’. This is also what our data suggest: none of the outcomes are canonical modals or conditionals, but functionally similar, short-lived satellites.

In light of the fact that new satellites are significantly pragmatically motivated and that the ousting of the canonical form by a satellite depends on an array of usage factors, [Detges \(2020](#): 308) questions ‘the view that the grammaticalization of a new item is influenced by the existing grammatical system’, linking it to [Bybee et al.’s \(1994](#): 9) source determination hypothesis, which states that ‘the source meaning uniquely determines the grammaticalization path that the gram

will travel in its semantic development’ (see also [Detges 2004](#) and [Waltereit 2012](#)). It is true that pragmatic strategies underlie many changes and that usage factors are not part of the grammatical system, if narrowly construed. But Detges’s view perhaps presupposes too strong a dichotomy between usage and grammar, as far as a usage-based perspective, such as that of [Schmid’s \(2020\)](#) Entrenchment and Conventionalization Model, is concerned. In such a perspective, usage and grammar interact with each other to the extent that they form a feedback loop. Usage patterns, licensed by old bits of grammar, may give rise to new bits of grammar, which then license and constrain new usage patterns, and so on.

In my view, distributional properties are formal characteristics of a grammatical system and may be described without referring to any usage factor in great detail. This is not to deny that distributional properties could be ultimately functionally or diachronically motivated; most of them likely are. In the case of the bidirectional cycles, morphosyntactic vagueness has been argued to be a panchronic distributional property of Mandarin ([Kuo 2022a, 2024](#)). Therefore, if distributional properties are indeed properties of a grammatical system, we may say that the bidirectional cycles are embedded within and influenced by the grammatical system of Mandarin. In a system where the contrast between modal and conditional is more consistently signalled distributionally, bidirectional cycles are less plausible. For example, English modal auxiliaries and conditional markers are more sharply distinguished. The former are post-subject, unless inverted, while the latter are pre-subject and do not undergo subject–auxiliary inversion. The former are finite, while the latter, though able to head (non-)finite clauses, are not (non-)finite by themselves. While the modal auxiliary *should* may function as a conditional marker, it is not likely that a conditional like *if* or *unless* would take on verbal features (e.g. finiteness) and become a modal auxiliary.⁸ This suggests that changes may indeed be influenced by the existing grammatical system. However, they are not likely to be completely determined by it, as overrides and irregularities are rife in language.

8.5.3 Grammaticalization and models of syntax

Are the bidirectional cycles processes of grammaticalization? If grammaticalization is defined in terms of unidirectionality, they are not. If defined in terms of increased grammaticality (i.e. something becomes more grammatical as it grammaticalizes), they are also not. This is because increased grammaticality and unidirectionality are notions of non-equivalence ([Kuo 2021, 2024](#)). The cycles are

⁸ It is notoriously difficult to determine whether the distinction between finiteness and non-finiteness is grammatically encoded in Mandarin ([Hu et al. 2001](#)). Therefore, finiteness cannot be used as a criterion to distinguish between modal and conditional in Mandarin.

enabled by morphosyntactic vagueness, which is a notion of equivalence: properties may be shared equally between two categories, such that in some contexts an item may be equally categorized as one or the other.

If grammaticalization is defined in terms of regularity in the sense that it is a process that produces a grammatical item under typical conditions, then the cycles are processes of grammaticalization. This is because morphosyntactic vagueness is a typical phenomenon from a usage-based perspective, given the pervasiveness of gradience (Section 8.2). If it is typical, then processes enabled by it should be regular: they happen in contexts characterized by properties shared equally between two categories. The regularity of bidirectional processes enabled by morphosyntactic vagueness has been argued for in Kuo (2021, 2024, 2025, submitted). The idea that such processes are composed of a regular process (e.g. grammaticalization) and an irregular one (e.g. degrammaticalization) has been similarly argued against. The arguments boil down to: ‘regularity need not be unidirectionality’ (Kuo submitted).

If one defines grammaticalization in the sense that it brings about gradient grammatical contrast, then bidirectional cycles may be viewed as underpinned by a lack of strong grammaticalization: the contrast between modal and conditional in Mandarin is only weakly and inconsistently maintained and not obligatorily marked, enabling bidirectional cyclicity. Therefore, bidirectional cyclicity may be hypothesized as only possible when the relevant categories are weakly grammaticalized. The reason why categories may be weakly grammaticalized, as far as Mandarin is considered, may be associated with the tendencies of its users towards vague, indirect language use, where the predominant mode of communication is characterized by morphosyntactic underspecification and a heavy reliance on pragmatics (e.g. Chang 1998). Bisang (2004) and Ansaldo et al. (2018) also propose that the comparative lack of obligatory grammatical categories and paradigms in Mandarin and Mainland Southeast Asian languages is related to the fact that pragmatic inference plays a more prominent role in such languages, where what is morphosyntactically and obligatorily marked in other languages is frequently pragmatically inferred, such as tense, aspect, modality, number, and (in)definiteness (Ansaldo et al. 2018: 231). Other properties of Mandarin indicative of its tendencies towards underspecification include its extensive zero coding strategies, such as zero subject and zero anaphora (Erbaugh 2019).

It is likely impossible to fully determine the direction of causation: whether it is the lack of strong grammaticalization in Mandarin or its typological properties that cause vague, indirect language use or the other way around. Much ink has also been spilled over how, from the perspective of cross-cultural communication, Mandarin favours communicative vagueness and indirectness (e.g. Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey 1988; Chang 1999) and how connections between linguistic indirectness and other cultural domains such as philosophy and social structure may be made; see Chang (1998: 537–541) for a review. But again, the

direction of causation is difficult to determine. As language and culture are intertwined, Chinese language use and grammar and its culture likely form an ecology where they foster different kinds of vagueness and indirectness in tandem. See also [Narrog \(2012: ch. 6.3\)](#) for a cultural view on modality and semantic change.

Morphosyntactic vagueness is a challenge for models of syntax with a layered hierarchy of categories, whether syntax is conceptualized more functionally (e.g. Functional Discourse Grammar; [Hengeveld 2017](#)) or formally (e.g. Generative Syntax; [van Gelderen 2019](#)). Such models would treat conditionals as higher than modals, as the former are typically more peripheral and scope over the latter, but morphosyntactic vagueness suggests that the supposed hierarchical contrast between modal and conditional may be consistently neutralized. Vagueness-enabled bidirectionality is an even more serious challenge, as it suggests that vagueness is not just some synchronic usage quirk but a diachronically relevant phenomenon, which diachronic implementations of most models are likely ill-equipped to handle, as they have been designed to model unidirectionality (e.g. [Roberts 2010](#); [LaBarge 2016](#); [Hengeveld 2017](#); [van Gelderen 2019](#)). Bidirectional cycles perhaps present the most serious challenge, as they highlight the scale of vagueness and the pervasiveness of non-unidirectional changes. One could perhaps define cyclicity narrowly to rule out the bidirectional changes considered here as cyclical. But as discussed above, this would likely be too restricted.

8.6 Conclusion

Conventional indirectness specified at the level of constructions provides an overarching account of bidirectional cycles between modal and conditional. Previous accounts of such bidirectional changes focus on morphosyntactic vagueness at the slot level ([Kuo 2022a, 2024](#)) but overlook the fact that morphosyntactic vagueness is enabled by the construction-level specification of conventional indirectness. Furthermore, such a specification likely motivates cycles of indirectness: diachronically there may be a preference for newer, less frequent items in indirect speech-act constructions, as they are perceived to be more indirect than older, more frequent ones, provided that such newer items resemble older ones to the extent that they are still considered as conventional. The account of bidirectional cyclicity presented here has implications for models of cyclicity, grammaticalization, and syntax, but as research on vagueness-enabled bidirectionality is relatively limited (e.g. [Kuo 2021, 2024, submitted](#)), let alone bidirectional cyclicity, just how far-reaching these implications are remains to be explored.

Morphological coordination in Sinitic languages as a form of cyclic change

Haiping Long and Jian Wang

9.1 Introduction

By ‘morphological coordination’, we mean two morphological markers with approximately the same meaning/grammatical function simultaneously appearing in one syntactic position to assume the same meaning/grammatical function. For example, according to [Wen \(2016: 67\)](#), Khatu Hani (Lolo-Burmese, Tibeto-Burman) *mɛ*⁵⁵ and *ku*³³ may be used separately as nominalizers,¹ but they can also be used simultaneously in one position to assume the function; see (1):²

(1) Morphological coordination in Khatu Hani

<i>tʃɿ</i> ³⁵	<i>tʃɿ</i> ³⁵	<i>mɛ</i> ⁵⁵	<i>ku</i> ³³	<i>xa</i> ⁵⁵	<i>kho</i> ⁵⁵
straight	straight	NOMZ	NOMZ	road	

‘A fairly straight road’ (Quoted from [Wen 2016: 67](#))

This chapter presents data on morphological coordination in Sinitic languages and discusses their implications for studies of cyclic change. The chapter is divided into five parts, including this introduction. [Section 9.2](#) is the theoretical background. [Section 9.3](#) demonstrates different cases of morphological coordination in Sinitic languages. [Section 9.4](#) deals with the implications of the data for studies of cyclic change. [Section 9.5](#) is the conclusion.

For the Chinese data, we follow the era divisions of [Sun \(2006: 15–20\)](#), which are: (a) Old Chinese (771 BCE to 220 CE), (b) Middle Chinese (220 CE to 960 CE),

¹ In Sinitic languages, the head of a noun phrase (e.g. *xa*⁵⁵ *kho*⁵⁵ ‘road’ in (1)) may be omitted, and the remaining structure (e.g. *tʃɿ*³⁵ *tʃɿ*³⁵ *mɛ*⁵⁵ *ku*³³ ‘being fairly straight’ in (1)) can function as a noun phrase by itself. In this context, the markers of the adjective phrase (e.g. *mɛ*⁵⁵ *ku*³³ in (1)) have assumed the role of nominalizers, and the common practice in the literature on Sinitic languages is to use the term ‘nominalizer’ to refer to their usages in both contexts. This approach is supported by works such as [Zhu \(1961\)](#), [Yap et al. \(2011\)](#), and others.

² Most languages in the region of China are tone languages, and digits are sometimes used to indicate the tone of sounds. For example, ⁵⁵ indicates a high-level tone and ³⁵ indicates a tone rising from middle to high pitch.

(c) Early Modern Chinese (960 CE to 1900 CE), and (d) Modern Chinese (1900 CE to present). We use the label *historical Chinese* to refer to any period of Chinese other than Modern Chinese. The Chinese data cited have the following separate sources: (a) previous studies on the same topics, (b) the historical section of the texts of the Centre of Chinese Language, Peking University (CCL Corpus), and (c) the texts of the Media Language Corpus of the Communication University of China (MLC Corpus), which is a transcribed corpus of radio and TV programmes, including dialogues, monologues, narrations, and broadcasts. To ensure accuracy, we have checked the historical Chinese data against published books.

All the data from other Sinitic languages cited in the chapter have two separate sources: (a) previous studies on the same topics and (b) fieldwork. All the informants of the fieldwork data have doctorate degrees and at least five years of experience studying the languages consulted. Their names are indicated in brackets after each sentence example quoted.

9.2 Theoretical background

By ‘cyclic change’, we mean ‘a type of stepwise, recurrent, and inherently directional evolution, which results in the renewal of linguistic markers’ (Hansen 2020b: 165). When studying cases of cyclic change, the literature generally assumes that when a new linguistic marker emerges, the older one is not necessarily discarded but may coexist with the new marker; see van Gelderen (2009b, 2016b, 2022), Hansen (2014, 2018a, 2020b), and others.

The English past tense may serve as a convenient example. Hopper (1991: 23–24) argues that the English language originally used vowel alternations in strong verbs to indicate past tense (see *sang* in (2a)). More recently, English speakers have adopted an apical suffix [t] or [d] to indicate past tense (see *admire* in (2b)). The two forms of past tense coexist in Modern English, but never simultaneously in one syntactic position.

(2) Past tense in English

- a. *They sang.* (Quoted from Hopper 1991: 24)
- b. *I admired it.* (Quoted from Hopper 1991: 24)

An understudied issue in the literature on cyclic change is whether the new marker and the old marker may coexist simultaneously in one syntactic position. For this question, studies on coordinated compounding may provide some cues. Haiman and Ourn (2000) and Haiman (2010) argue that in Khmer (Austroasiatic), there

is a tendency to put two synonymous lexemes together to form a compound with the same meaning; see (3a) and (3b):

(3) Coordination of synonymous lexemes in Khmer

- a. *crəəh* *rəəh*
 choose choose
 ‘choose’ (Quoted from [Haiman and Ourn 2000](#): 147)
- b. *kmaŋ* *sətrəw*
 enemy enemy
 ‘enemy’ (Quoted from [Haiman and Ourn 2000](#): 148)

According to [Liu and Zhang \(2013\)](#), [R. Li \(2014\)](#), [Dong \(2018\)](#), [Wu and Wu \(2018\)](#), and others, this is also an important way to form new words in Modern Chinese; see (4a) and (4b):

(4) Coordination of synonymous lexemes in Modern Chinese

- a. 燃燒
 rán *shāo*
 burn burn
 ‘to burn’ (Quoted from [R. Li 2014](#): 16)
- b. 船舶
 chuán *bó*
 ship ship
 ‘ship’ (Quoted from [Wu and Wu 2018](#): 109)

While the coordination of lexemes in Khmer and Modern Chinese has been fairly extensively discussed in the literature, few linguists have discussed the coordination of morphological markers (i.e. morphological coordination) in these languages, not to say its implications for the studies of cyclic change. In the [next section](#), we attempt to fill the gap by presenting extensive evidence for morphological coordination in a special group of languages, namely Sinitic languages.

9.3 Morphological coordination in Sinitic languages

This section is divided into six parts, dealing respectively with the coordination of copulas ([Section 9.3.1](#)), prepositions ([Section 9.3.2](#)), conjunctions ([Section 9.3.3](#)), modifying markers ([Section 9.3.4](#)), accusative markers ([Section 9.3.5](#)), and aspect markers ([Section 9.3.6](#)) in Sinitic languages.

9.3.1 Coordination of copulas in historical Chinese

According to [Hong \(2000: 293–298\)](#) and [Zhu \(2013: 3–4\)](#), *wéi*, probably grammaticalized from the lexical verb *wéi* ‘do’, began to be used as a copula in Old Chinese no later than the late fifth century BCE; see (5):

(5) Copula *wéi* in Old Chinese

余為伯儻。余，而祖也。

Yú **wéi** Bóshū. Yú, ěr zǔ yě.
I COP Boshu I your ancestor FP

‘I **am** Boshu. I am your ancestor.’ (*Zuǒ Zhuàn*, Xuāngōng Sān Nián [The Commentary of Zuo, the 3rd Year of Lord Xuan], quoted from [Zhu 2013: 3](#); the late fifth century BCE)

[Li and Thompson \(1977: 420–427\)](#), [Wang \(1989: 194\)](#), [Feng \(1993: 277–311\)](#), [Peyraube and Wiebusch \(1994: 392–398\)](#), [Liang \(2012: 43–49\)](#), and others argue that *shì*, probably grammaticalized from the pronominal demonstrative *shì*, began to be used as a copula in Old Chinese no later than the first century BCE; see (6).

(6) Copula *shì* in Old Chinese

襄子曰：“此必是豫讓也。”

Xiāngzǐ yuē: “Cǐ bì **shì** Yùràng yě.”
Xiangzi say this surely COP Yurang FP

‘Xiangzi said, “This surely **is** Yurang.”’ (*Shǐjì*, Cìkè Lièzhuàn [Shih Chi, Collected Biographies of Assassins], quoted from [Liang 2012: 47](#); the first century BCE)

Apart from the separate copulative usages of *wéi* and *shì*, [Mei \(2000: 10\)](#) and [Liu \(2005: 113–115\)](#) argue that the two copulas may appear in the same syntactic position in historical Chinese after the second century CE; see (7).

(7) Coordinated copula *wéi shì* in Middle Chinese

汝何以都不復進？為是塵務經心，天分有限？

Rǔ héyǐ dōu bù fù jìn? **Wéi shì** chén wù
you why all NEG again improve COP worldly affair

jīng xīn, tiānfēn yǒu xiàn?
occupy mind talent have limit

‘Why do you stop making progress? **Is** it because business has occupied your study time? Or is it because you do not show talent in study?’ (*Shìshuō Xīnyú*, Xián Yuán [New Anecdotes of Social Talk, Virtuous Ladies], [CCL Corpus]; the mid-fifth century CE)

The two authors also argue that the coordinated copulative *wéi shì* only existed in historical Chinese between the second and eighth century CE. In Early Modern Chinese and Modern Chinese, only *shì* was and is still used as a copula; see (8) and (9):

(8) Copula *shì* in Early Modern Chinese

俺是根基人家的婆娘。

ǎn *shì* gēnjī rénjiā de póniáng.

I COP moral family POSS wife

‘I *am* a wife of a decent family.’ (*Xǐngshì Yīnyuán Zhuàn*, 10 Huí [Love Stories to Awaken the World, chapter 10]; quoted from [Long and Zhou 2025](#): 6; the early 17th century CE)

(9) Copula *shì* in Modern Chinese

平均數是五個。

Píngjūn shù *shì* wǔ gè.

average number COP five CLF

‘The average number *is* five.’ (Quoted from [Zhang and Tang 2011](#): 112)

9.3.2 Coordination of prepositions in historical and Modern Chinese

Coordination of synonymous prepositions was an important way of forming prepositions in historical Chinese. [Wang and Ye \(2017: 477\)](#) found at least 14 prepositions that were formed through the coordination of synonymous prepositions in Middle and Early Modern Chinese; see (10).

(10) Coordinated prepositions in Middle Chinese and Early Modern Chinese

zì cóng (自從) ‘from’ (literally: ‘from + from’),
dāng zhí (當值) ‘at (the time)’ (literally: ‘at (the time) + at (the time)’),
fāng dāng (方當) ‘at (the time)’ (literally: ‘at (the time) + at (the time)’),
jí zhì (及至) ‘up to’ (literally: ‘up to + up to’),
bǐ zhì (比至) ‘up to’ (literally: ‘up to + up to’),
dài zhì (迨至) ‘up to’ (literally: ‘up to + up to’),
lín zhì (臨至) ‘up to’ (literally: ‘up to + up to’),
gǎn chèn (趕趁) ‘taking advantage of’ (literally: ‘taking advantage of + taking advantage of’),
zūn yī (遵依) ‘according to’ (literally: ‘according to + according to’),
yī jù (依據) ‘according to’ (literally: ‘according to + according to’),
yī yuán (依緣) ‘according to’ (literally: ‘according to + according to’),
zhào yī (照依) ‘according to’ (literally: ‘according to + according to’),

píng yī (憑依) 'according to' (literally: 'according to + according to'),
àn zhào (按照) 'according to' (literally: 'according to + according to').

Coordination of synonymous prepositions is also an important way of forming prepositions in Modern Chinese. [Chen \(2002: 98\)](#) found at least 14 prepositions that were formed through the coordination of synonymous prepositions in Modern Chinese; see (11):

(11) Coordinated prepositions in Modern Chinese³

lián tóng (連同) 'with' (literally: 'with + with'),
zì cóng (自從) 'from' (literally: 'from + from'),
zì dǎ (自打) 'from' (literally: 'from + from'),
dǎ cóng (打從) 'from' (literally: 'from + from'),
bǐ jiào (比較) 'comparing with' (literally: 'comparing with + comparing with'),
jù lí (距離) 'away from' (literally: 'away from + away from'),
rèn píng (任憑) 'despite' (literally: 'despite + despite'),
tīng píng (聽憑) 'at the mercy of' (literally: 'at the mercy of + at the mercy of'),
tīng rèn (聽任) 'at the mercy of' (literally: 'at the mercy of + at the mercy of'),
tōng guò (通過) 'through' (literally: 'through + through'),
yī zhàng (依仗) 'relying on' (literally: 'relying on + relying on'),
àn zhào (按照) 'according to' (literally: 'according to + according to'),
yī zhào (依照) 'according to' (literally: 'according to + according to'),
yóu rú (猶如) 'like' (literally: 'like + like').

Chinese prepositions meaning 'from' are a good example to illustrate this way of forming prepositions. In Old Chinese, there were at least two prepositions meaning 'from': one is *zì* (see (12)), probably grammaticalized from the reflexive pronoun *zì* 'self' (see [Xing 2013: 85](#)); the other is *cóng* (see (13)), probably grammaticalized from the verb *cóng* 'follow' (see [Ma and Xu 2002: 18](#)).

³ One may wonder if these coordinated prepositions can appear in reverse order in Modern Chinese and historical Chinese. To this question, our answer is that in Modern Chinese, all of them only follow the orders seen in (11), but in historical Chinese, we may find examples of some of these prepositions in reverse order. For example, among the 14 coordinated prepositions listed in (11), we have found at least four of them appearing in reverse order in some stages of historical Chinese:

cóng zì (從自) 'from' (literally: 'from + from'),
jiào bǐ (較比) 'comparing with' (literally: 'comparing with + comparing with'),
rèn tīng (任聽) 'at the mercy of' (literally: 'at the mercy of + at the mercy of'),
zhào yī (照依) 'according to' (literally: 'according to + according to').

Compared with examples of the coordinated prepositions in (11), examples of the above coordinated prepositions in the reverse order are rare in historical Chinese.

(12) Preposition *zì* in Old Chinese

王來自商，至於豐。

Wáng lái **zì** Shāng, zhì yú Fēng.

King come from Shang reach to Feng

‘The King comes **from** Shang place, and arrives at Feng place.’ (*Shàng Shū*, Wǔ Chéng [Book of History, Wu Cheng], quoted from [Xing 2013](#): 85; ca. the 10th century BCE to the 6th century BCE)

(13) preposition *cóng* in Old Chinese

有玄雲從西北方起。

Yǒu xuán yún **cóng** xīběi fāng qǐ.

have dark cloud from northwest direction rise

‘There was dark cloud rising **from** the northwest direction.’ (*Hánfēi Zǐ*, Shí Guò [Hanfei Zi, Shi Guo], quoted from [Ma and Xu 2002](#): 18; the mid-third century BCE)

Apart from the separate prepositional usages of *zì* and *cóng*, from Middle Chinese no later than the mid-fifth century CE, the two prepositions may also co-occur in one syntactic position with the same meaning; see *zì cóng* in (14):

(14) Coordinated preposition *zì cóng* in Middle Chinese

自從裴、劉刑罰以來，諸將陳力百倍。

Zìcóng Péi, Liú xíng fá yǐlái, zhū jiàng chén
from Pei Liu criminal penalty to.come all general show

lì bǎi bèi.
strength hundred times

‘(Starting) **from** Mr Pei and Mr Liu having received a criminal penalty, all the generals are trying their utmost.’ (*Quán Liúsòng Wén*, Juàn 28 [Complete Books of Liu Song Era, Vol. 28], [CCL Corpus]; the mid-fifth century CE)

In Early Modern Chinese no later than the mid-14th century CE, *dǎ*, which probably grammaticalized from the lexical verb *dǎ* ‘beat’ according to [Xing \(2013: 88\)](#), was also used as a preposition meaning ‘from’; see (15):

(15) Preposition *dǎ* in Early Modern Chinese

我打這背巷裡去。

Wǒ **dǎ** zhè bèi xiàng lǐ qù.

I from DEM out-of-the-way lane inside go

‘I go **from** this out-of-the-way lane.’ (*Shāgǒu Quànfū* [Kill the Dog to Dissuade the Husband], quoted from [Xing 2013](#): 88; the mid-14th century CE)

Apart from the separate prepositional usages of *zì*, *cóng*, *dǎ* and the coordinated prepositional usage of *zì cóng*, in Early Modern Chinese no later than the early 17th century CE, the preposition *dǎ* began to co-occur with the preposition *cóng*, resulting in a coordinated preposition *dǎ cóng* with the same meaning (see (16)); in Modern Chinese no later than the early 20th century, the preposition *dǎ* began to co-occur with the preposition *zì*, resulting in a coordinate preposition *zì dǎ* with the same meaning (see (17)):

(16) Coordinated preposition *dǎ cóng* in Early Modern Chinese

有個白大官打從京中出來的。

Yǒu gè Bái dàguān **dǎ cóng** jīng zhōng chū lái
have CLF Bai big.official from capital inside come.out

de.

NOMZ

‘There is an official Mr Bai coming **from** the capital.’ (*Èrkè Pāi’àn Jīngqí*, Juàn Sān [Slap the Desk in Amazement, Series Three]; the early 17th century CE)

(17) Coordinated preposition *zì dǎ* in Modern Chinese

徐老爺，自打雞鳴驛分手之後，你心中還有意惦念我麼？

Xú Lǎoyé, **zì dǎ** Jīmíng Yì fēnshǒu zhìhòu, nǐ xīn
Xu Lord from Jiming.Station separate after you heart

zhōng hái yǒuyì diànniàn wǒ me?
inside still intentionally remember me Q

‘Lord Xu, **from** the time we separated at Jiming Station, have you ever thought of me?’ (*Pénggōng Àn*, Dì 104 Huí [Judge Peng’s Cases, Chapter 104, [CCL Corpus]; the early 20th century CE)

The coordinated prepositions *zì cóng*, *dǎ cóng*, and *zì dǎ* have almost all disappeared in contemporary Modern Chinese. We conducted a search in the tagged text section of the MLC Corpus (80,765,720 characters) and found 157,476 tokens of these prepositions. Among them, 145,745 (92.55 per cent) were examples of the preposition *cóng*; 9,766 (6.20 per cent) were examples of the preposition *zì*; the rest (a little more than 1.00 per cent) were examples of the other four forms of these prepositions (i.e. *dǎ*, *zì cóng*, *dǎ cóng*, and *zì dǎ*).

9.3.3 Coordination of conjunctions in historical and Modern Chinese

At least from the late 19th century to the late 20th century, coordination of synonymous conjunctions was a highly productive way to form new conjunctions in

Chinese. Li (2012: 40) found at least 10 coordinated conjunctions that were used during the time; see (18):

- (18) Coordinated conjunctions in Chinese from the late 19th century CE to the late 20th century CE⁴

rán ér (然而) ‘but’ (literally: ‘but + but’),
ér qiě (而且) ‘and’ (literally: ‘and + and’),
bìng qiě (並且) ‘and’ (literally: ‘and + and’),
yì huò (抑或) ‘or’ (literally: ‘or + or’),
jí biàn (即便) ‘even if’ (literally: ‘even if + even if’),
rú ruò (如若) ‘if’ (literally: ‘if + if’),
kuàng qiě (況且) ‘let alone’ (literally: ‘let alone + let alone’),
shè ruò (設若) ‘if’ (literally: ‘if + if’),
tǎng ruò (倘若) ‘if’ (literally: ‘if + if’),
tǎng huò (倘或) ‘if’ (literally: ‘if + if’).

Chinese conjunctions meaning ‘and’ may be a good example to illustrate this way of forming conjunctions. According to Qin (2009), in Old Chinese no later than the sixth century BCE, *qiě* began to be used as a conjunction meaning ‘and’; see (19):

- (19) Conjunction *qiě* in Old Chinese

其人美且仁。

Qí rén měi qiě rén.

DEM person beautiful and righteous

‘That person is beautiful **and** righteous.’ (*Shī Jīng*, Guó Fēng, Qí Fēng [The Book of Songs, National Customs, Customs of Qi Nation], quoted from Qin 2009: 63; the 11th century BCE to the 6th century BCE)

According to Sun (2011), in Old Chinese no later than the mid-fifth century BCE, *ér* began to be used as a conjunction meaning ‘and’; see (20):

⁴ Among the 10 coordinated conjunctions listed in (18), we have found at least five of them following the reverse order in some stages of historical Chinese:

qiě ér (且而) ‘and’ (literally: ‘and + and’),
qiě bìng (且並) ‘and’ (literally: ‘and + and’),
biàn jí (便即) ‘even if’ (literally: ‘even if + even if’),
qiě kuàng (且況) ‘let alone’ (literally: ‘let alone + let alone’),
ruò tǎng (若倘) ‘if’ (literally: ‘if + if’).

Compared with examples of the coordinated conjunctions in (18), examples of the above coordinated conjunctions in the reverse order are rare in historical Chinese.

(20) Conjunction *ér* in Old Chinese

始吾於人也，聽其言而信其行。

Shǐ wú yú rén yě, tīng qí yán ér xìn
beginning I to person FP listen.to his words and believe
qí xíng.
his action

‘At first when I judged a person, I listened to his words **and** believed that he would do what he said’. (*Lún Yǔ*, Gōngyě Cháng [The Analects of Confucius, Gongye Chang], quoted from Sun 2011: 102; the late 5th century BCE to the early 4th century BCE)

According to Li et al. (2015), apart from the separate conjunctive usages of *ér* and *qiě*, in Old Chinese no later than the late third century BCE, the two conjunctions began to co-occur in one syntactic position, resulting in a coordinated conjunction *ér qiě* of the same meaning; see (21):

(21) Coordinated conjunction *ér qiě* in Old Chinese

知節用裕民，則必有仁聖賢良之名，而且富有厚丘山之積矣。

Zhī jié yòng yù mín, zé bì yǒu rénshèng
know save expenses rich people thus surely have kind
xiánliáng zhī míng, ér qiě yǒu fùhòu qiūshān zhī
virtuous NOMZ name and have rich mountain NOMZ
jī yǐ.
accumulation FP

‘If he knows how to be thrifty and to make people rich, he will be famous for being kind and virtuous, **and** he will have a lot of accumulated wealth’. (*Xúnzǐ*, Fù Guó [Xunzi, Making the Nation Rich], quoted from Li et al. 2015: 15; ca. 313 BCE to 238 BCE)

Yu (1996) argues that in Middle Chinese no later than the mid-fifth century CE, *bìng* began to be used as a conjunction meaning ‘and’; see (22):

(22) Conjunction *bìng* in Middle Chinese

郗超每聞欲高尚隱退者，輒為辦百萬資，並為造立居宇。

Xī Chāo měi wén yù gāoshàng yǐntuì zhě,
Xi.Chao every.time hear want.to noble be.hermit NOMZ
zhé wéi bàn bǎi wàn zī, bìng wéi zào lì jū yǔ.
thus do buy million goods and do build set.up palace

‘Every time Xi Chao heard of a person who wanted to be a hermit, he would buy goods that cost huge sum of money (for the person), **and** build a palace (for him)’. (*Shìshuō Xīnyǔ*, Qīyì [New Anecdotes of Social Talk, Qiyi], quoted from Yu 1996: 36; the mid-fifth century CE)

Apart from the separate conjunctive usages of *ér*, *qiě*, *bìng*, and the coordinated conjunctive usage of *ér qiě*, in Early Modern Chinese no later than the mid-19th century CE, *bìng* began to co-occur in one syntactic position with *qiě*, resulting in a coordinated conjunction *bìng qiě* of the same meaning; see (23):

(23) Coordinated conjunction *bìng qiě* in Early Modern Chinese

弟弟們早十多天而如此忙碌，為什麼？並且每次都說忙，沒有一次從容。
Dìdì men zǎo shí duō tiān ér rúcǐ mánglù, wèi
 younger.brothers early over.ten day and so be.busy for
shénme? Bìng qiě měi cì dōu shuō máng, méiyǒu yī
 what and every time all say be.busy not.have one
cì cōng róng.
 time go.easy

‘The younger brothers have been busy since over ten days ago, why? **And** every time they are saying that they are busy. There is not a single time that they were easy’. (*Zēng Guófān Jiā Shū* [Zeng Guofan’s Family Letters], [CCL Corpus]; the mid-19th century CE)

The above-mentioned five forms of conjunctions meaning ‘and’ are all used in contemporary Modern Chinese, but their respective frequencies of occurrence are different. We conducted a search in the tagged text section of the MLC Corpus (80,765,720 characters) and found 174,782 tokens of these conjunctions. Their respective frequencies of occurrence are: *ér*: 58,464 (31.53 per cent); *qiě*: 2,632 (1.42 per cent); *bìng*: 68,299 (36.84 per cent); *bìng qiě*: 8,475 (4.57 per cent); *ér qiě*: 47,542 (25.64 per cent).

9.3.4 Coordination of modifying markers in dialects of Mandarin

In most Sinitic languages, one single marker *ti* or *kə* may be used as a relativizer, a possessive marker, and a nominalizer; see Norman (1988: 184–185). Following Norman (1988: 184–185), Lü (1999: 157–158), and others, we use the term ‘modifying markers’ to refer to these multifunctional markers. When the languages using the modifying marker *ti* were in contact with the languages using the modifying marker *kə*, we may find a coordinated modifying marker *ti kə* or *kə ti*; see Wang (2012), Long and Wen (2015: 196), Long and Huang (2023: 253), and others.⁵

Take Xuancheng Jianghuai Mandarin, a dialect of Jianghuai Mandarin used by speakers in Xuancheng City, as an example. According to Wang (2012: 167–168),

⁵ In Sections 9.3.4, 9.3.5, and 9.3.6, we follow Heine and Kuteva (2005, 2006), and others, and argue that a contact-induced grammatical change is essentially not different from similar changes happening in a single language.

among the speakers using the dialect, those who are over 70 years old prefer the modifying marker $kə^{31}$ which was borrowed from the more ancient neighbouring Wu (Sinitic), whereas the younger generation prefers the modifying marker $tɿ^{31}$ that is commonly used in the dialects of Jianghuai Mandarin. The modifying marker $tɿ^{31} kə^{31}$ was formed through the coordination of the two modifying markers, and is used by both the old and the younger generations; see (24), (25), and (26):

- (24) Relativizers in Xuancheng Jianghuai Mandarin

ni^{213} $ʃi^{213}$ $tɿ^{31}/$ $kə^{31}/$ $tɿ^{31} kə^{31}$ $uən^{213}$ $tsaŋ^{31}$
 you write REL REL REL article
 ‘the article *that* you’ve written’ (Quoted from Wang 2012: 168)

- (25) Possessive markers in Xuancheng Jianghuai Mandarin

ni^{213} $tɿ^{31}/$ $kə^{31}/$ $tɿ^{31} kə^{31}$ $uən^{213}$ $tsaŋ^{31}$
 you POSS POSS POSS article
 ‘your article’ (Hongquan Rao, fieldwork; also see Wang 2012: 168)

- (26) Nominalizers in Xuancheng Jianghuai Mandarin

$xɔ^{213}$ $ʃuɛ^{43}$ $tɿ^{31}/$ $kə^{31}/$ $tɿ^{31} kə^{31}$ $ɛiɔ^{213}$ $xɔ^{213}$ $tsɿ^0$
 very handsome NOMZ NOMZ NOMZ young.man
 ‘a very handsome young man’ (Hongquan Rao, fieldwork; also see Wang 2012: 168)

Wang (2012: 169) notes that among the three modifying markers, $tɿ^{31}$ has assumed the dominant status, and the other two (i.e. $kə^{31}$ and $tɿ^{31} kə^{31}$) are falling out of use, especially among the younger generations.

9.3.5 Coordination of accusative markers in Yongding Hakka

Modern Chinese uses the particle pa^{214} , which is commonly argued to have developed from the verb pa^{214} meaning ‘take hold of’ in Early Modern Chinese (see, e.g. Wang and Wei 2012), to introduce an accusative noun phrase; see (27):

- (27) Accusative marker pa^{214} in Modern Chinese

Ni^{214} pa^{214} $ʃən^{35} mə^0$ $zəŋ^{55}$ $tʂ^h u^{55} tɕ^h y^{51}?$
 2SG ACC what throw out
 ‘What are you going to throw out?’ (Jian Wang, fieldwork)

According to X. Li (2014), Yongding Hakka in western Fujian Province commonly uses the particle *tsian*²² to introduce an accusative noun phrase; see (28):

- (28) Accusative marker *tsian*²² in Yongding Hakka

*ni*²³ ***tsian***²² *ma*²¹*ko*²² *zəŋ*³⁴ *tʰɿtʰoi*²¹?
2SG ACC what throw out

‘What are you going to throw out?’ (quoted from X. Li 2014: 107)

When speakers of Yongding Hakka came into contact with Modern Chinese, they began to introduce the Modern Chinese accusative marker *pa*²¹⁴ into the language by putting the accusative marker *pa*²¹⁴ side by side with the existing accusative marker *tsian*²²; see (29):

- (29) Coordinated accusative marker *tsian*²² *pa*²¹⁴ in Yongding Hakka

*ni*²¹⁴ ***tsian***²² ***pa***²¹⁴ *ma*²¹*ko*²² *zəŋ*³⁴ *tʰɿtʰoi*²¹?
2SG ACC what throw out

‘What are you going to throw out?’ (Xiuhong Yan, fieldwork; also see X. Li 2014: 106, 109)

X. Li (2014) does not discuss possible future developments of these accusative markers in Yongding Hakka, but since the Modern Chinese accusative marker *pa*²¹⁴ is pervasively replacing all the other accusative markers in the Sinitic languages (see Li and Chappell 2013a, 2013b, and others), we argue that *tsian*²² and *tsian*²² *pa*²¹⁴ are likely to eventually be replaced by *pa*²¹⁴ in the language.

9.3.6 Coordination of aspect markers in dialects of Xiang

A number of dialects of Xiang use the particle *ka* as perfective markers; see Wu (1996a), Xia (2021: 222), and others. According to Wu (1996b: 154), the perfective marker *ka* probably developed from the verb *ka* meaning ‘remove, get rid of’; see (30) for the perfective marker *ka*⁴¹ in Changsha Xiang:

- (30) Perfective marker *ka*⁴¹ in Changsha Xiang

*no*⁴¹ *kʰɿ*⁴⁵ ***ka***⁴¹ *i*⁴¹*xəu*²¹ *tʰin*⁴⁵ *tɿ*²⁴ *kan*⁴¹ *tɕi*⁴¹ *tʰi*⁰.
1SG go PFV after listen get say FP

‘I heard (that) after I went there.’ (Quoted from Wu 1996b: 133)

These dialects of Xiang also use the particle *ta* (*da*) as perfective markers; see Wu (1996a), Xia (2021: 222), and others. According to Wu (1996b: 154), the perfective

marker *ta* (*da*) probably developed from the verb *ta* (*da*) meaning ‘get, obtain’; see (31) for the perfective marker *ta*²¹ in Changsha Xiang.

(31) Perfective marker *ta*²¹ in Changsha Xiang

*Xəu*²¹*pei*⁴⁵ *iəu*²¹ *tau*⁴⁵ *Tsan*³³*fan*³³ *Tsən*³³*ɕio*²⁴ *təu*²⁴ ***ta*²¹**
 then again arrive Zhangfang middle.school read PFV
*i*²⁴ *n̩iẽ*¹³ *põ*⁴⁵.
 one year half

‘Then (he) went to Zhangfang Middle School to continue his studies for one and a half years.’ (Quoted from Wu 1996b: 134)

Speakers of these dialects sometimes coordinate the two markers to refer to the same grammatical function; see (32) for the coordinated perfective marker *ka*⁴¹ *ta*²¹ in Changsha Xiang; also see Cui (1996: 181–182) and Xia (2021: 222) for examples of the coordinated perfective marker *ka*⁴⁵ *da*¹¹ in Yiyang Xiang, and see Zeng (1996: 196–197) for examples of the coordinated perfective marker *ka*⁵⁵ *ta*⁴² in Xiangtan Xiang.

(32) Coordinated perfective marker *ka*⁵⁵ *ta*⁴² in Changsha Xiang

*Iɛ*⁴¹ *mau*²¹ *kan*⁴¹ *ko*⁴⁵ ***ka*⁴¹ *ta*²¹** *sɿ*¹³*kan*³³ *tɕiəu*²¹ *pu*²⁴
 also NEG say pass PFV time ADV NEG
*tɕyn*⁴¹ *tʰan*⁴⁵*sɿ*⁴⁵ *ta*²¹.
 allow visit FP

‘Nobody has told (me) that (I) am not allowed to visit (the sick) after the visiting hours.’ (Quoted from Wu 1996b: 136)

The authors do not specifically discuss possible future developments of these perfective markers in dialects of Xiang, but according to Wu (1996b: 133), at least in Changsha Xiang, *ta*²¹ seems to be gaining dominance over, and thus replacing, *ka*⁴¹ and *ka*⁴¹ *ta*²¹.

9.4 Discussion

Section 9.3 has presented six cases of morphological coordination in Sinitic languages: they are the coordination of copulas (Section 9.3.1), of prepositions (Section 9.3.2), of conjunctions (Section 9.3.3) in historical and Modern Chinese, of modifying markers in dialects of Mandarin (Section 9.3.4), of accusative markers in Yongding Hakka (Section 9.3.5), and of perfective markers in dialects of Xiang (Section 9.3.6). These cases are instances of cyclic change because they all involve the renewal of linguistic markers, yet they are different from canonical

cases of cyclic change reported in the literature (see van Gelderen 2009b, 2016b, 2022; Hansen 2014, 2018a, 2020b; and others) because they involve a stage in which two linguistic markers coexist in the same syntactic position with the same meaning/grammatical function.

The literature of Sinitic languages has long observed this interesting phenomenon of coordinating two synonymous (or at least nearly synonymous) markers. However, there is still disagreement regarding the motivation behind it; see Lü (1963), Wang (1997), Qiu (2010), Liu and Zhang (2013), R. Li (2014), Dong (2018), Wu and Wu (2018), and others. Nevertheless, linguists agree that this form of coordination may help make the intended meaning/grammatical function more explicit, but it does not serve to strengthen, intensify, or dramatize the meaning/grammatical function in the languages.

The coordinated prepositions (Section 9.3.2) and coordinated conjunctions (Section 9.3.3) in historical and Modern Chinese deserve special attention. Among the three non-coordinated prepositions dealt with in Section 9.3.2 (i.e. *zì*, *cóng*, and *dǎ*), only the older *cóng* remains in Modern Chinese. The newest one of the three (i.e. *dǎ*) did not replace the older *cóng* but was instead replaced by it. Similarly, among the three non-coordinated conjunctions dealt with in Section 9.3.3 (i.e. *ér*, *qiě*, and *bìng*), the oldest one (i.e. *ér*, 31.53 per cent) and the newest one (i.e. *bìng*, 36.84 per cent) coexist, and the older one (i.e. *qiě*, 1.42 per cent) is almost out of use in Modern Chinese.

These changes seem to support Detges (2020), who investigated possible cyclic changes within the domain of future markers in Western Romance languages (mainly French and Spanish). Detges argues that incoming markers do not necessarily replace older ones. The only issue is that according to the author, when a linguistic marker is in fact replaced, that marker is frequently not the central ‘canonical’ one but merely a satellite. Upon examining the three non-coordinated prepositions (i.e. *zì*, *cóng*, and *dǎ*) and the three non-coordinated conjunctions (*ér*, *qiě*, and *bìng*), we have found no evidence of the replaced ones (i.e. the prepositions *zì*, *dǎ* and the conjunctions *qiě*, *bìng*) being used as satellite forms in historical Chinese. It seems that further studies are still needed to determine whether Detges’s (2020) arguments hold true.

The coordinated conjunction *ér qiě* dealt with in Section 9.3.3 may draw our attention to an issue that is generally understudied in the literature. The conjunction was formed through the coordination of the two synonymous conjunctions *ér* and *qiě* in Chinese no later than the third century BCE and is still commonly used in Modern Chinese, according to our search of the tagged text section of the MLC Corpus.⁶ Given that it has been used in Chinese for more than

⁶ The MLC Corpus does not reflect the real usage of oral Modern Chinese since it is a transcribed corpus of radio and TV programmes. We have searched the Corpus of Contemporary Oral

2,200 years, one may wonder whether this coordinated conjunctive form, which is supposed to be an intermediate phase of development, may replace the other forms and become the dominant usage in the language. What is more important to studies of cyclic change is whether this kind of coordination may finally replace the two linguistic markers and become the dominant form in the language. For this issue, the Modern Chinese coordinated conjunction *ér qiě* may not be able to give us a definitive answer, but another coordinated conjunction *jí biàn* ‘even if’ may.

According to Wang (2017), the conjunction *jí* ‘even if’, which probably grammaticalized from the lexical verb *jí* ‘approach’, appeared in Old Chinese no later than the first century BCE (see (33)); the conjunction *biàn* ‘even if’, which probably grammaticalized from the lexical verb *biàn* ‘be suitable, be comfortable’, appeared in Middle Chinese no later than the eighth century CE (see (34)):

(33) Conjunction *jí* in Old Chinese

公子即合符，晉鄙不授公子兵而複請之，事必危矣。

Gōngzǐ jí hé fú, jīnbǐ bù shòu gōngzǐ bīng ér
lord even.if match seal Jinbi NEG give lord army and
fù qǐng zhī, shì bì wēi yǐ.
again enquire it thing surely be.in.danger FP

‘Even if you, my lord, manage to match the commander’s seal with Jinbi (and thus order him to give you the army), he may still refuse to give you the arm, and may instead ask the king to confirm the order. If that happens, your scheme will be in danger.’ (*Shǐjì*, Wèi Gōngzǐ Zhuàn [Shih Chi, Biography of Lord Wei], quoted from Wang 2017: 75; first century BCE)

(34) Conjunction *biàn* in Middle Chinese

便與先生應永訣，九重泉路盡交期。

Biàn yǔ xiānshēng yīng yǒng jué, jiǔ.chóngquán
even.if with you should for.ever part nether.world

lù jìn jiāo qī.
way all associate time

‘Even if we part for ever in this life, we can still talk on the way to the nether world.’ (*Quán Táng Shī*, Jùan 225 [Complete Collections of Poems in Tang Dynasty, chapter 225]; quoted from Wang 2017: 75; 712 CE to 770 CE)

Beijing Mandarin (1,860,000 characters) and found that it almost exclusively uses the coordinated conjunction *ér qiě* (18 tokens, 90.00 per cent; the other conjunction being *ér*, two tokens, 10.00 per cent). It seems that at least in oral Beijing Mandarin, *ér qiě* has assumed a dominant status.

Apart from the separate conjunctive usages of *jí* and *biàn*, from Early Modern Chinese no later than the early 17th century CE, the two conjunctions may also co-occur in one syntactic position with the same meaning; see *jí biàn* ‘even if’ in (35):

(35) Coordinated conjunction *jí biàn* in Early Modern Chinese

且莫說我是父母官, 即便平交, 也不該如此!

Qiě mò shuō wǒ shì fùmǔ guān, jí biàn píng
and NEG say I COP local.magistrate even.if ordinary

jiāo, yě bù gāi rú cǐ!
associate also NEG should like DEM

‘Don’t say that I am the local magistrate. **Even if** we are ordinary people and are friends, we shouldn’t do this.’ (*Xingshì Héngyán*, Juàn 29 [Lasting Words to Awaken the World, chapter 29], quoted from Wang 2017: 76; the early 17th century CE)

Among the three conjunctions *jí*, *biàn*, and *jí biàn*, only the coordinated form *jí biàn* is still used in Modern Chinese. The changes seem to show that in a cyclic change, the coordinated form may sometimes prevail. Although the literature has reported few cases of this kind of non-canonical form of cyclic change, we refuse to accept that it is an unusual phenomenon occurring only in Sinitic languages. Rather, we argue that there may have been plenty of similar cases in other languages, which should not be overlooked by studies of cyclic change.

9.5 Conclusion

In this study, we have reported six cases of morphological coordination in Sinitic languages. They are: coordination of copulas (Section 9.3.1), of prepositions (Section 9.3.2), and of conjunctions (Section 9.3.3) in historical and Modern Chinese, coordination of modifying markers in dialects of Mandarin (Section 9.3.4), coordination of accusative markers in Yongding Hakka (Section 9.3.5), and coordination of perfective markers in dialects of Xiang (Section 9.3.6). We argue that these cases exemplify cyclic change that is different from the types that have been identified in the literature by van Gelderen (2009b, 2016b, 2022), Hansen (2014, 2018a, 2020b), and others.

Some of these cases give support to Detges (2020), who argues that in a cyclic change involving more than two linguistic markers, it is not always the newest one that replaces the others; the older ones may also prevail. Some cases show that a cyclic change does not always involve one linguistic marker replacing the other one; the two markers may compromise and find ways to coexist. Together, these

cases indicate that a cyclic change is not a simple linear change involving a new linguistic marker replacing the older one; the real change could be more complicated. With the example of the Chinese coordinated conjunction *jí biàn* ‘even if’, we have demonstrated a possible form of cyclic change that is understudied in the literature.

Numerous instances of coexistence resulting from compromise in social interactions have been documented by researchers such as [Bardis \(1979\)](#), [Oldenhof et al. \(2013\)](#), and [Wendt \(2020\)](#). These studies illustrate how social dynamics often lead to situations where different elements coexist due to negotiated compromises. Additionally, the literature suggests that some language structures may develop directly from social interactions, as noted by [Fitch and Sanders \(2005\)](#) and [Maynard and Peräkylä \(2006\)](#). These interactions can shape linguistic evolution, leading to the coexistence of different linguistic markers. Based on this premise, it is reasonable to speculate that there could be more cases of linguistic marker coexistence arising from compromise across various world languages. This phenomenon is similar to those observed in Sinitic languages in this study, where linguistic markers adapt and coexist rather than replace one another. To fully understand these complex processes, this area deserves further and more extensive crosslinguistic investigation, potentially revealing broader patterns of language development influenced by social factors.

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10

‘Or’ cycles

Mira Ariel and Caterina Mauri

10.1 Linguistic cycles: neutral versus dedicated constructions

According to [van der Auwera and Krasnoukhova \(2020\)](#), the predominant pattern for marking negation in language is a single negative marker (over 80 per cent of languages). At the same time, a substantial minority of languages do have two or more negators, and many more languages show multiple negative constructions once their history is considered. Why should a language have more than one construction to express negation synchronically? Why should a language renew its negative marking time and again throughout its history? The answer is that motivations which are incompatible with one another compete over the form and function of negation. Cyclic changes occur because at different phases a different motivation (either economy or expressivity) has the upper hand.

Excluding truly free variants (to the extent that such synonymous constructions even exist), the expectation is that different forms serve at least partially different functions. Indeed, Kiparsky and Condoravdi (2007) note that for 3,000 years *all* Greek dialects have shown two negative constructions, one for plain negation and one for emphatic negation. Although the lexical items in Greek are not related, the repeated (cyclical) renewals of the same negative forms and functions attest to the structural stability at the basis of the distinction between what they call plain and emphatic negation. Our chapter offers a parallel analysis for various alternativity (‘or’) constructions in Hebrew, English, and Italian. These show a similar variation between what we prefer to call neutral and dedicated alternativity constructions.

But before we launch into our study, we should clarify our analytic categories, which differ somewhat from the ones in the literature. Given multiple linguistic constructions serving broadly the same function, it is mostly straightforward enough to distinguish between them based on their formal markedness. For example, French *ne... pas* is clearly more marked than *pas*, and *either... or* is clearly more marked than *or*. But a distinction based on functional differences is less sharply drawn, we find. For negation, linguists have distinguished between plain and emphatic negation or between weak and strong negation. These terms do not always make it clear whether the distinction is based on a formal or a functional criterion. Thus, ‘emphatic’ negation may refer to the (strong interpretation)

function involved or to the (more marked) form it takes. And ‘plain’ negation may refer to the (weak interpretation) function or to the (unmarked) form it takes (see the criticism of Jespersen by [Ahern and Clark 2017](#)). We here make an effort to distinguish between formal and functional criteria.

Starting off with functions, a strong negative interpretation for *not* *X* is ‘absolutely *X*-less’ (‘no tums at all’ in (1a)). A weak negative interpretation for *not* *X* is ‘less than *X*’ ([Giora et al. 2005](#)). Note that even before the concessive repair in the last line in (1b), negation only mitigates ‘constant’, rather than cancelling it altogether:

- (1) a. ANGELA: ... (H) Are are you eating Tums,
 ... for calcium?
 DORIS: No.
 .. I’m **not eating Tums**. (SBC 011)¹
- b. MONTOYO: from the time that you start .. kindergarten,
 to the time that you .. graduate from the university,
 (H) it’s constant,
 .. **not constant**,
 .. but somewhat of a consistent .. bombardment .. of
 values (SBC 012)

This is no doubt a significant functional distinction, but we believe that accounting for cyclic changes calls for a different, more abstract functional distinction. We propose to contrast specific subfunctions with general/underspecified functions instead, along the lines of [Mauri \(2008b\)](#) (cf. the notions of ‘semantic domain’ and ‘degree of coding’ in [Mauri 2008b](#): 70–77). On our account, both strong and weak negative interpretations are specific subfunctions of a more abstract negative function.

Moving on to the forms mobilized for expressing the various negative interpretations, we accordingly draw a distinction between dedicated and neutral constructions. Dedicated constructions are specialized for specific subfunctions (e.g. the original historic use of *ne... pas* for strong negation). We define neutral constructions as ones serving *any* (subfunction) of negation. Since they are not explicitly marked for any specific subfunction, neutral constructions can accommodate all (or at least many) relevant subfunctions. English *not*, which can either mitigate (weak negation) or absolutely deny (strong negation) the constituent it modifies, is one such neutral negator. Thus, dedicated versus neutral constructions are defined according to what function(s) they can accommodate, where the difference lies between general (neutral) constructions and specific (dedicated) constructions.

¹ The Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English ([Du Bois et al. 2000–2005](#)).

What we find in the literature is that the (weak) default interpretation of neutral negation constructions has been treated as if it is their encoded meaning (e.g. [van der Auwera 2009](#)). The ability of neutral constructions to serve strong negation too has then often been downplayed. Moreover, because of the important role of negative **strengtheners** (minimizers, which denote a very small quantity, e.g. ‘step’, ‘finger’, and are used to reinforce negation), the fact that negative **weakeners** (maximizers), too, do exist has been ignored. Note that when a minimal concept is denied, the non-minimal concept is denied all the more. But when a maximal concept is denied, the denial of a more minimal concept is not guaranteed. Indeed, such weakeners are attested, and they support our assumption that neutral constructions must not be reduced to conveying a single weak negation interpretation. To see the working of negative weakeners, consider (2):

(2) TOM2: ... judges in New Mexico don't do something like that,
do they?

TOM3: I'm not **really** a judge,
uh I'm a retired judge. (SBC 032)

Not surprisingly, just as negation strengtheners (e.g. *not a step/penny*) minimize the negated item, negation weakeners (*not really* X, *not too* X) maximize the negated item. Note that it is Tom₂'s reference to Tom₃ as *a judge*, not as *really a judge*, that needs to be negated here, just like ‘money’ rather than literally ‘a penny’ is what's at stake for *not a penny*. In other words, just like *penny* is only used as a means to trigger strong negation, so is *really* only a means to trigger weak negation. Similarly, just like *at all* directly strengthens *not* (*not at all like me*, SBC 015), *sort of/sorta/kind of/kinda* directly weakens *not* (*I'm kind of not interested*—LSAC, Longman Corpus of Spoken American English). Thus, the neutral *not* can be either strengthened or weakened, which attests to its neutrality between the two readings.²

Finally, as also argued by [Mauri \(2008b\)](#) in relation to the coding of coordinating connectives, we predict a markedness correlation between form and function, such that functional generality correlates with unmarked form (the working of an economy motivation), while functional specificity correlates with marked form (resulting from the application of expressivity). In other words, we predict that neutral constructions will typically be less marked than dedicated constructions.

Neutral constructions are predicted to be formally simple because they do not specify an additional meaning on top of negation. In principle, they should then require heavier inferencing to allow addressees to zero in on the relevant subfunction, but neutral constructions are commonly associated specifically with weak negation. This is why neutral constructions show the effect

² Now, there is no doubt that weak and strong interpretations are not equal. Giora et al.'s (2005) psycholinguistic experiments point to the default status of weak negation. Still, our point about neutral constructions not being restricted to weak negative interpretations stands and justifies the hypothesis of a neutral negative construction competing with dedicated constructions.

of economy. This is also true for possessive constructions, where inalienable possession is the default (see Erb and Ariel, this volume), and for ‘or’ constructions (which are symmetric rather than asymmetric by default—see [Section 10.2.2](#)). Dedicated constructions, on the other hand, save on inferencing by being explicit (more expressive). Naturally, however, they are more complex because they must specify some function in addition to negation. The use of these marked constructions is therefore predicted for the less frequent cases, where the default meaning is rejected, and the speaker is not confident that the addressee will actually (or easily) derive the non-default function.³ This may lead to an almost complementary distribution between neutral and dedicated constructions.

[Table 10.1](#) summarizes our analytical categories for negative forms and functions.

Table 10.1 Neutral and dedicated negative forms, their functions, and the motivations behind the form/function correlations

Form	Example	Motivation (behind form)	Function
Neutral (typically unmarked)	<i>Not X</i>	Economy	By inference: i. Weak negation (‘less than X’)—default Or ii. Strong negation (‘not X whatsoever’)
Dedicated (typically marked)	<i>Not really X</i>	Expressivity	Encoded: Weak negation (less than X)
	<i>Not X at all</i>		Strong negation (no X whatsoever)

Cyclic shifts are then motivated by two competing motivations, which explains the back-and-forth changes involved. Economy and expressivity each promote a different form/function correlation. We consider the relevant competitors to be a single, neutral construction versus (at least) two constructions, one of which is a dedicated one:

- (3) a. Single construction: Neutral (*ne*)
- b. Two constructions: Neutral (*ne*); Dedicated (*ne* + strengthener *pas*)
- c. Single construction: Neutral (*ne... pas*)
- d. Single construction: Neutral (*pas*)

³ See Ariel (2014) about the processing effort trade-off between monosemous and polysemous ‘or’ constructions.

(3) analyses a cyclic shift for French negation, even though *ne* (in 3a) and *pas* (in 3d) are definitely different negators. As van der Auwera and van Olmen (this volume) suggest, there need not be an identity between the initial and final stages, but the two stages must be nontrivially similar to one another. Indeed, both show a single, unmarked construction, neutral with respect to weak and strong negation. This similarity, van der Auwera and van Olmen add, suggests that the changes leading to them are also similar. Indeed, *ne* evolved from a more marked negative construction, as *pas* did. A single neutral construction is the product of economy. Multiple dedicated constructions are the product of expressivity.

We note that the actual diachronic trajectory often includes additional stages. In addition, not all phases must be attested. For example, Modern Standard French has not absolutely lost *ne pas*. Spoken Quebecois essentially has. Use of *ne* was c. 0.4 per cent in this register already in the 1970s (Sankoff and Vincent 1977).

10.2 The ‘or’ cycle: neutral versus dedicated constructions

The goal of this chapter is to argue that cyclic changes are relevant to ‘or’ constructions too. We examined corpus data from English (mainly the SBC, Du Bois et al. 2000–2005, and LSAC), Italian (MIDIA corpus for the diachronic survey, D’Achille and Grossmann 2017; KIParla corpus for contemporary spoken Italian, Mauri et al. 2019), and Hebrew (HeTenTen—see note 10). A selected number of ‘or’ constructions (as detailed for each expression in the relevant sections below) were analysed with respect to their context, their neutral or dedicated form (see Section 10.1), and the interpretations associated with the forms. Just as for negation, we here distinguish between neutral constructions (usable for any subfunction) and dedicated constructions, each specialized for some specific subfunction.

For negation we distinguished between weak and strong negation. For ‘or’ constructions we distinguish between two stances associated with the alternatives: symmetric and asymmetric stances. Conveying a symmetric stance, the speaker equally orients towards both alternatives, assigning each the same interactional status. Conveying an asymmetric stance, on the other hand, the speaker treats one of the alternatives as more likely true, or as more pivotal, or as favoured by them. Traditional analyses of natural language ‘or’ constructions have been influenced by the logical concept of disjunction, which is why they excluded asymmetric ‘or’ constructions from discussion. We see no reason for this exclusion, especially since, as we show below, symmetric and asymmetric alternativity constructions share diachronic cycles.

Table 10.2 summarizes the categories we used in the analysis of the forms and functions associated with ‘or’ construction. Note that these are identical to the ones we applied to negation in Table 10.1. In the remaining part of this section we elaborate on what we consider to be subfunctions associated

with neutral and dedicated ‘or’ constructions. [Section 10.2.1](#) then exemplifies neutral and dedicated constructions in Hebrew, while [Section 10.2.2](#) explains cyclicity as a result of oscillation between two competing motivations: economy (calling for a neutral construction) and expressivity (calling for dedicated constructions).

Table 10.2 Neutral and dedicated alternativity forms, their functions, and the motivations behind the form/function correlations

Form	Example	Motivation (behind form)	Function
Neutral (typically unmarked)	<i>X or Y</i>	Economy	By inference : i. Symmetric stance—default Or ii. Asymmetric stance
Dedicated (typically marked)	<i>Either X or Y</i>	Expressivity	Encoded Symmetric stance
	<i>X or alternatively Y</i>		Asymmetric stance

We need to backtrack before we can discuss the relevant functions at hand. When analysing competing negative constructions, the relevant discourse functions seem self-evident: weak and strong negation. But when ‘or’ constructions are considered, the competing functions are not so clear. Linguists have traditionally analysed natural language ‘or’ as giving rise to one of two interpretations: INCLUSIVE and EXCLUSIVE disjunction. On the INCLUSIVE reading, *X or Y* is interpreted as ‘either X or Y or both X and Y’. On the EXCLUSIVE reading, *X or Y* is interpreted as ‘either X or Y but not both X and Y’. Now, the INCLUSIVE reading can be seen as the general (unspecified) function because it seems to allow both EXCLUSIVE and conjunctive (like ‘and’) disjunction readings. Thus, if these functions are relevant to interlocutors, we should expect to find constructions dedicated to EXCLUSIVE disjunctive readings and/or to conjunctive disjunctive readings, in addition to the unmarked construction which serves any disjunctive function. However, despite attempts to identify linguistic constructions which are specialized for an EXCLUSIVE reading, none were found ([Mauri 2008](#)).

An altogether different analysis of ‘or’ was argued for by [Ariel and Mauri \(2018\)](#). On this analysis, ‘or’ neither carries an inclusive meaning nor gives rise to an INCLUSIVE reading (see [Fishman et al. 2023](#) for experimental evidence). Ariel and Mauri have reanalysed the so-called EXCLUSIVE reading as a number

of different ‘one of X and Y’ readings, and in addition they identified a number of readings not hitherto recognized. Finally, the linguistic meaning of ‘or’ connectives, they proposed, is mere alternativity. ‘X or Y’ means that there is an unresolvable competition between X and Y—alternatives to one another—for a single slot. Note that according to this analysis, the number of alternatives committed to by the speaker is not part of the semantic meaning. Rather, it is derived according to the specific reading; more specifically, according to the context relevant alternativity relation assumed to hold between the disjuncts. Thus, the neutral (unmarked) *or* construction in (4) ([X or Y]) should accommodate both the EXCLUSIVE reading in (a) (only one option is predicted to be correct) and the conjunctive reading in (b) (both options are presented as true), since both utterances introduce the disjuncts as alternatives to each other. Indeed it does:

- (4) a. Should I turn left **or** right now? (jokesoftheday.net/funny-joke-photo-Should-I-turn-left-or-right-now-/2017110650)
 b. Reception to your left **or** your right (Eye clinic sign, Santa Barbara, spotted November 2023)

But what should we consider as specific subreadings, potentially expressed by dedicated ‘or’ constructions? Here’s one obvious candidate:

- (5) STEPHANIE: (H) Glen got fifteen seventy **or something like that**
 (SBC 035)

Something in the [X or *something like that*] construction is not an independently defined alternative. Rather, it is construed based on the pivot *fifteen seventy* as an alternative which is relevantly similar to X, with the additional understanding that the difference between the two alternatives is inconsequential (Ball and Ariel 1978; Ariel 2014). Being a dedicated construction, it is not attested in many languages and it is duly marked formally.⁴

But this is not how we analyse neutral and dedicated ‘or’ constructions here. Instead of classifying the constructions according to their rather many specific readings (subfunctions), we opt for a more abstract distinction between families of ‘or’ functions and constructions. We note that some constructions specifically mark the alternatives they introduce as symmetric to one another, where the speaker shows the same stance towards all the alternatives. These constructions are typically unaffected if the order of disjuncts is reversed. Other constructions are specifically asymmetric to one another, and order reversal creates an

⁴ In fact, [X or *something like that*] is a sub-construction of a more general [X or *something*] neutral sub-construction, which accommodates a number of readings, but this is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Ariel 2014).

ungrammaticality or at least an interpretative change. These two stanced construction types constitute our dedicated constructions. The neutral ‘or’ construction does not specify any speaker stance and accommodates both symmetric and asymmetric cases (see Table 10.2). We were tipped off to the role of (a)symmetry for *or* constructions by examining the diachronic sources for *or* expressions. In Mauri and Ariel (in prep.), we analyse the rise of neutral *or* constructions, which, we argue, necessarily evolve from either symmetric discourse patterns (e.g. QUESTION PARTICLE *coffee?* QUESTION PARTICLE *tea?*) or asymmetric discourse patterns (e.g. *Coffee*, IF IT IS NOT THE CASE, THEN *tea*).

Now, by definition, all alternativity constructions entail an *equivalence* between the alternatives because the alternatives must be equally appropriate candidates for the relevant role. ‘Left’ and ‘right’ in both examples in (4) are equally suitable candidates for filling the slot of ‘where I should turn now’ (4a) and for ‘where the reception is’ (4b). The same is true for ‘fifteen seventy’ and the narrowed meaning of *something like that* in (5)—a number similar to *fifteen seventy* (for the relevant context). However, this alternativity equivalence does not automatically translate to a symmetric speaker stance vis-à-vis each alternative. Stance (a)symmetry is an additional, orthogonal feature of alternativity constructions. Thus, ‘or’ constructions express a variety of readings, all involving a procedural equivalence between the alternatives, but in addition, some constructions convey a symmetric speaker stance towards the alternatives, while others convey an asymmetric stance towards them. These stances may be left to inference (when the neutral construction is used) or they may be overtly marked by a dedicated construction. Overtly marked (a)symmetric ‘or’ constructions constitute the dedicated constructions we contrast with neutral constructions, where stance is not marked (although it may be inferred).

Indeed, we find three types of ‘or’ constructions crosslinguistically (and sometimes intra-linguistically too) with respect to (a)symmetry stance: (i) neutral, (ii) dedicated-symmetric, and (iii) dedicated-asymmetric. To better understand what we mean by neutral versus dedicated stanced constructions (either symmetric or asymmetric), let’s consider the three-way construction distinction available in Hebrew, which we describe in Section 10.2.1.

10.2.1 Neutral and dedicated ‘or’ constructions in Hebrew

Example (6) is a popular antiregime change slogan often chanted by Israeli demonstrators in the winter of 2023:

- (6) *Demokratya o mered.*
Democracy or revolt.

This unmarked Hebrew ‘or’ construction, we claim, is neutral with respect to the symmetry between its disjuncts. As such, it can accommodate both symmetric and asymmetric stance readings (cf. also [Klinedinst and Rothschild 2012](#) for English). Indeed, based on inference, (6) can be interpreted either symmetrically (as in 7a) or asymmetrically (as in 7b):

- (7) a. There are only two viable alternatives: one is democracy, another is revolt. (By implicature, no other alternatives, specifically, dictatorship, are acceptable options.)⁵
 b. If there is no democracy there will be revolt. (By implicature, a threat to rebel if democracy is compromised.)

Note that for the symmetric reading we can reverse the order of the disjuncts in (6), but this is not so for the asymmetric reading. *Mered o demokratya* ‘Revolt or democracy’ cannot be interpreted as in (7b) (it can, of course, be interpreted as the less plausible ‘if there is no revolt there will be democracy’).

Next, in its symmetric (7a) interpretation, (6) is paraphrasable by the dedicated construction in (8a), while in its asymmetric (7b) interpretation it is paraphrasable by different dedicated constructions, as in (8b.i, ii):⁶

- (8) a.~ *O demokratya o mered.*
 Either democracy or revolt.
 b.i.~ *Demokratya. va.lo mered.*
 Democracy. If.not revolt.
 b.ii. ~ *Demokratya. o im lo mered.*
 Democracy. Or if not revolt.

Unlike the neutral construction in (6), (8a) and (8b) are not ambiguous between the two symmetry types spelled out in (7). The doubly marked syntactically symmetric (8a) is only interpretable as a symmetric, EXHAUSTIVE alternativity case (as in (7a), see [Ariel and Mauri 2018](#)). And the singly marked syntactically asymmetric (8b) are only interpretable as asymmetric, INCREMENTAL alternativity cases. These are constructions which were not initially planned as alternativity constructions, and it is only retroactively that they are processed as an alternativity construction.

Indeed, while the neutral (canonical) construction can be reinforced by either a symmetry builder (the additional, initial *o*, as in (8a)) or by a symmetry breaker (the added *im lo* ‘if not’ in (8b.ii)), this is not the case for the double *o*

⁵ Of course, the demonstrators are only pretending to have the same stance towards democracy and revolt in order to show that they will not hesitate to rebel.

⁶ ~ indicates a constructed example.

construction in (9a). (9a) is marked symmetric, and cannot therefore admit an asymmetry reinforcer (the expressions in italics). The same is true for (9b), which is marked asymmetric (*va.lo* ‘if not’) and becomes unacceptable when reinforced by a symmetry builder (the initial *o* ‘or’ in italics):

- (9) ~a. *o* *demokratya* *o* *va.lo/im lo* *mered.*
 Either democracy or *if.not/if not* revolt.
 ~b. *o* *demokratya* *va.lo/im* *lomed.*
 Either democracy or if.not/if not revolt.

A note is due here on the neutral ‘or’ construction’s default and non-default interpretations. Just as neutral negation is more frequently interpreted as weak negation (its default), so neutral ‘or’ constructions are associated with a symmetric stance by default (see, e.g. (4a, b)). But there is a difference between dedicated-symmetric constructions and neutral constructions taken as symmetric. Unlike the symmetry associated with a dedicated construction, the default symmetry associated with neutral constructions is not a foregrounded speaker message. Moving on to asymmetric readings associated with neutral constructions, we note that this can be marked by prosody (indicating an afterthought), or a delayed subsequent disjunct (after another’s turn, for example), or by the creation of an asymmetry in commitment. For instance, X may introduce an assertion (which comes with a speaker commitment), but Y may introduce an interrogative, which reflects a speaker’s non-commitment. So marking (a)symmetries is not necessarily limited to a choice between conventionally dedicated constructions.

10.2.2 The competing motivations behind cyclicity

As mentioned above, we view cyclic changes as resulting from oscillating between satisfying competing motivations. Economy favours a single, unmarked neutral construction, which accommodates all subfunctions. Expressivity, on the other hand, favours having (marked) constructions dedicated to some specific subfunctions (in addition). Speakers are torn between these opposite strategies, and thus may shift between one and two constructions (i.e. having or not having a dedicated construction for some subfunction in addition to the neutral construction). Unlike the classical negation case, we observe two competitions between neutral and dedicated ‘or’ constructions because of the two stances, symmetric and asymmetric:⁷

⁷ These are the direct competitors. But a language may have more types of ‘or’ constructions differing as to symmetric and asymmetric stance. In fact, we cannot rule out early phases where a language might have only a dedicated construction for some subfunction (say, asymmetric alternativity).

- (10) a. A single, unmarked neutral alternativty construction, unspecified for stance
versus
two constructions: (i) neutral; (ii) symmetric stance
- b. A single, neutral, alternativty construction, unspecified for stance
versus
two constructions: (i) neutral; (ii) asymmetric stance

How often do speakers use neutral versus dedicated, stanced constructions? In other words, how often does economy win and how often does expressivity win? Table 10.3 shows that, as expected, the economical neutral constructions are by far the dominant pattern. Synchronic English (SBC) only shows a minority of formally marked stanced constructions (5.2 per cent), and so does the KIParla corpus (Mauri et al. 2019)⁸ (20.5 per cent). In other words, the overwhelming majority of ‘or’ constructions are not marked for stance. Dedicated-symmetric constructions are slightly more frequent in both corpora in comparison with dedicated-asymmetric ones. Yet, the latter show greater formal variation, with a variety of elements encoding the speaker’s stance (see also discussion in Section 10.3.1). Frequent Italian dedicated-asymmetric constructions include *o comunque* ‘or anyway’ (93/250), *o anche* ‘or also/even’ (63/250), and *o meglio* ‘or better’ (25/250).

Table 10.3 Neutral, dedicated-symmetric, and asymmetric constructions in English and Italian

Language	Total ‘or’ constructions	Dedicated: total	Dedicated: symmetric	Dedicated: asymmetric	Neutral
English	1053 (100%)	55 (5.2%)	35 (3.3%)	20 (1.9%)	998 (94.8%)
Italian	2806 (100%)	575 (20.5%)	325 (11.6%)	250 (8.9%)	2231 (79.5%)

We note, however, that this count most likely underestimates the number of explicitly marked asymmetric constructions (Mauri and Ariel in prep.). With an eye to grammaticization, we only searched for asymmetry expressions immediately following *or*. But here are two such non-adjacent cases:

⁸ The total count of *o* ‘or’ in the KIParla corpus (KIP and ParlaTO modules) is 3,161, but we excluded the two idiomatic constructions *più o meno* ‘more or less’ and *bene o male* ‘for better or worse’, leaving us with 2,806 occurrences.

- (11) a. HAROLD: Of males in general. ((1 LINE OMITTED))
 Or males under thirty **I think** it is. (SBC 002)
- b. ... people will police **or** assist in policing, **if you will**, their co-workers.
 (LSAC)

Moreover, many INCREMENTAL (asymmetric) constructions are cued by intonation. In fact, the great majority of REPAIR cases are indicated by a switch in conversational turn or at least to a different intonation unit. But then, these are not restricted to the asymmetric REPAIR constructions.

10.3 The power of the competing expressivity and of economy in 'or' constructions

We see diachronic change as embedded in synchronic innovation and variation. Cyclic changes, we must remember, are only a linguists' metaphor (Hansen 2020). It is only in retrospect that the shift from neutral to dedicated and then back to neutral constructions can be analysed as a coherent general system change, despite the fact that its grammaticization spans over extended periods of time. Speakers, the actual agents introducing these changes do not operate on such large timescales or such abstract generalizations. They have no motivation to change their grammar in order to maximize expressivity or economy. All they do is mobilize their current linguistic means, sometimes innovatively, in order to meet their local communicative intentions (Keller 1994; Ariel 2008: part II). In other words, what is a real enough general diachronic cycle of change is composed of numerous small steps, each independently motivated by a local pragmatic motivation, which may not be the same across contexts (Epstein 1994; van Gelderen 2009; Rupp and Tagliamonte 2019). Initially, local innovations constitute merely ad hoc uses, which better serve the speakers' immediate communicative intention. In due course, however, some of these ad hoc uses may get entrenched into new pieces of grammar through conventionalization and reanalysis (cf. Roberts and Rousou 2003; Roberts 2007). Section 10.3 focuses on such synchronic variations and innovations which can later be analysed as components within a single cycle. The synchronic data we cite below shows how the diachronic changes could have indeed come about.

We exemplify ad hoc markings of asymmetric constructions in Section 10.3.1 and of symmetric constructions in Section 10.3.2. Section 10.3.3 presents the power of economy, which undermines expressivity. When expressivity is lost, previously dedicated constructions become more neutral (not specified for specific subfunctions). Economy may then have the upper hand, pushing for loss of formal marking too. Section 10.4 will then exemplify historically entrenched cyclical shifts between neutral and (a)symmetric constructions.

10.3.1 Expressivity motivates ad hoc asymmetry marking

Overt, compositional marking of asymmetry is not very common (see again [Section 10.2.2](#)). For the most part, it is by inference that some ‘or’ constructions are established as asymmetric—recognizable by the irreversibility of the listed alternatives (see again [Section 10.2](#)). But our English and Italian data show that most, if not all, strings where ‘or’ is followed by a sentence adverbial constitute asymmetric ‘or’ constructions. In addition, many of these follow a final intonation unit boundary, which shows them to be INCREMENTAL constructions. Now, recall that we assume that each of the (potential) changes ultimately analysed as part of a coherent cyclical shift must be independently pragmatically motivated. The first question that arises then is why speakers wish to explicitly convey an asymmetric stance, which is layered on top of the conceptually symmetric alternativity relation encoded by ‘or’.

While all asymmetric constructions express some speaker stance, which specifically targets one of the alternatives, there is no motivation that is common to all of them (beside the highly abstract drive towards expressivity). Asymmetric stances are differently motivated and are not all alike. This is why we find different asymmetry markings (cf. the Italian data in [Section 10.2](#)). Since stance is typically (at least originally) compositionally expressed by some adverb attached to ‘or’, languages manifest a variety of these adverbs (although adverbs with similar meanings recur in different languages). The following is hence not at all an exhaustive description. Some asymmetric constructions take clear stance markers, such as *at least* and *even* (12a). These indicate that one of the alternatives is less expected or desired. Others, such as *maybe* (12b), indicate that the speaker is less confident about one of the alternatives (not necessarily the one so modified).⁹ Yet others add another, seemingly redundant alternativity marker, such as *else*, *put another way*, and *otherwise*, thereby undermining the mutual alternativity relation indicated by ‘or’, marking specifically the modified disjunct as an alternative to the first disjunct (‘or’ indicates mutual alternativity). This is not very different from the difference between the symmetric ‘X and Y are similar’ and the asymmetric ‘X is similar to Y’. Finally, some add-ons explicitly frame the modified alternative as replacing the other one, such as *well*, *I mean* (12d):

- (12) a. MONTOTOYO: ... Why is it that Italy has,
 (H) a much larger,
 ... a higher voter ... level of participation.
 ... Or Germany.
 ... **Or even** Canada. (SBC 012)

⁹ Cases where, for example, *maybe* modified both disjuncts are irrelevant and have been ignored here.

- b. KRISTIN: You're gonna have,
yeah.
A couple tortillas,
or maybe a sandwich,
or something along that line. (SBC 041)
- c. JIM: .. see if she's gonna be,
at a number where I could talk to her in maybe a half
an hour
or [forty-five] minutes,
VIVIAN: [Okay].
JIM: (H) **Or else** I'll give her a call tomorrow. (SBC 014)
- d. KRISTIN: .. that's gonna be forty (H) calories,
.. **or excuse me.**
Um @forty percent of your calories (SBC 041)

In (12a), Montoyo makes an assertion about Italy, but then adds Germany, thereby creating an INCREMENTAL disjunction. *Canada* is another incremental addition, but with an added stance that it's the least likely country to be different from the USA (the topic under discussion). Kristin (in (b)) more confidently proposes 'a couple of tortillas'. The proposal of 'a sandwich' is more tentative. Jim's first *or* in (c) is clearly symmetric, but his *or else* marks the modified alternative as more of a backup plan (close to *if not*). Finally, *excuse me* in (d) instructs the addressee to substitute the modified alternative for the first one.

The various adverbials attaching to 'or' seem to carry their conventional compositional meaning. Consider the contribution of *at least*:

- (13) I had really wanted to get drunk too **or at least** a buzz or something.
(LSAC)

Katzir (2019) analysed Hebrew 'at least' utterances as introducing non-optimal yet sufficient arguments (see also Lewis 2000). Indeed, 'get drunk' presents the stronger point here, while 'get a buzz' constitutes a weaker but still a sufficient point. At the same time, *or* contributes its alternativity function (the second point is an alternative to the first). This is true for all the 44 (interpretable) *or at least* tokens in LSAC.

Becker and Katzir (2018) carried out a systematic examination of three marked Hebrew constructions: *o ulay* 'or maybe', *o shema* 'or is it possibly the case', and *o lexilufin* 'or alternatively'. Fifty random examples were collected for each string from HeTenTen.¹⁰ The findings show a different discourse profile (contextual circumstances) for each of the constructions. Indeed, we note that the stance they impose is laid over different 'or' readings. Two of these constructions are clear asymmetry indicators, added onto constructions otherwise likely to be interpreted

¹⁰ HeTenTen is a Hebrew web corpus compiled using a web-crawler.

symmetrically. *O ulay* ‘or maybe’ is predominantly associated with what Ariel and Mauri (2018) called the RAISED OPTIONS reading (77.6 per cent), where the speaker simply raises potential options without necessarily committing to even one of the alternatives being the case. *O shema* ‘or is it possibly the case’ is mostly (71 per cent) associated with CHOICE ‘or’s, where the speaker elicits a choice between options from the addressee (see (4a)). In both constructions the speaker indicates lower confidence (sometimes expectedness) for the second alternative. The third construction will be discussed in Section 10.3.3.

The examination of asymmetrical ‘or’ constructions in KIParla reveals a similar picture for Italian. The most frequent type of construction shows *o* followed by an adverb indicating the non-optimality of the second alternative, which is presented as sufficient argument, but lower on some relevant discourse scale (see Katzir 2019). Out of 250 asymmetrical constructions, we indeed find 182 cases (73 per cent) of a non-optimality stance, with *comunque* ‘anyway, in any case’ being the most frequent adverb (93 occurrences of *o comunque*, cf. (14)), followed by *anche* ‘also, even (only)’ (63 occurrences), *almeno* ‘at least’ (12 occurrences), *solo* ‘only’ (9 occurrences), *semplicemente* ‘simply’ (3 occurrences), and *perlomeno* ‘at least’ (2 occurrences).

- (14) *sai* *che* *non* *incontri* *le* *persone* *che* *conosci*
 know:2SG that NEG meet:2SG DEF:PL people REL know:2SG
 o ***comunque*** *non* *tutti* *ma* *solo* *qualcuno*
 or in.any.case NEG all but just somebody
 ‘you know that you don’t meet the people you know or at least not
 everyone but just some’. (KIParla, TOD2007)

We then have 11 per cent asymmetrical constructions conveying an evaluative, frequently metalinguistic, stance, with *o* being followed by *meglio* ‘better’ (25 occurrences) or *peggio* ‘worse’ (three occurrences). A similar percentage (10 per cent) is attested for confidence asymmetry, with *o* being followed by epistemic adverbs, such as *magari* ‘maybe’ (18 occurrences) and *forse* ‘perhaps’ (six occurrences). Interestingly, only in 13 occurrences (5 per cent) does the adverb introduce a stronger option, be it in terms of precision (*o esattamente* ‘or exactly’, two occurrences; *o proprio* ‘or exactly’, four occurrences), in terms of preference (*o piuttosto* ‘or rather’), or in relation to some previous expectations (*o addirittura* ‘or even’).

10.3.2 Expressivity motivates ad hoc symmetry marking

Overtly marked asymmetric ‘or’ constructions are typically at least partially compositional. This is true for constructions lacking ‘or’ ([X. *if not* Y]),¹¹ as well as

¹¹ The new prosodic sentence is not compositional, but the connective is.

for constructions which build on a conventional ‘or’ [*X or if not/otherwise Y*], where the meaning of the added adverbial/connective accounts for the asymmetric stance. Overtly marked symmetric constructions are quite different. The symmetry aspect is not associated with a specific lexical expression whose compositional meaning (or inferred interpretation) is ‘symmetry’. It’s actually hard to imagine what such a ‘symmetry’ lexeme could be. This is why symmetry can only be a procedural function associated with certain alternativity constructions. We propose that syntactically parallel structures, which moreover maximize the resonance with each other, create a natural bias for symmetric stance. Resonance is the activation of affinities across units (Du Bois 2014). Indeed, we find that overtly symmetrical stance is most often conveyed by parallel correlative structures manifesting a high degree of resonance between the two disjuncts.¹² Consider the following examples from English (15), Biblical Hebrew (16), and Italian (17), all of which trigger an alternativity interpretation despite the absence of a conventionalized construction:

- (15) a. Practices of abortion of, **perhaps**, prepartum, **perhaps** postpartum (LSAC)
 b. **Maybe** it does, **maybe** it doesn’t. (LSAC)
- (16) a. *baXaru laxem ha.yom et mi tašavodun im*
 Choose you this.day Acc whom (ye)will.serve if/whether
et Elohim asher... ve.im et elohey ha.Emori...
 ACC God who... and.if/whether Acc the gods of the Amorites
 (Joshua 24, 15)
- b. *ba.me aqadem Yahwe ha.*
 With.what shall.I.come.before the.Lord...? question particle
aqadmenu... ba.sagalim... ha.
 shall.I.come.before.him with.calves...? question particle
yirce Yahwe... elim... ha eten
 will.want the.Lord rams?... question particle shall.I.give
bexori...
 my.first.born... (Micah 6, 7)
- (With what shall I come before the Lord...? **Ha** (question particle) shall I come... with calves...? **Ha** (question particle) will the Lord be pleased with... rams...? **Ha** (question particle) shall I give my firstborn...?)

¹² While [*X or Y*] certainly has a symmetric syntax, it’s not a symmetry that calls attention to itself, as compared with the overtly symmetric constructions below, where the heightened resonance between the alternatives calls attention to the symmetry.

- (17) *so che quel mese dovrò stare qua*
 know.1SG that DEM:M month must:FUT:1SG stay here
magari ospitato magari in albergo magari boh
 perhaps hosted perhaps in hotel perhaps who.knows
 ‘I know that during that month I will have to stay here **maybe** hosted by
 someone, **maybe** in a hotel, **maybe** who knows’ (KIParla, BOD2019)

All these examples, doubly marked for irrealis, convey a symmetric alternativity, albeit only indirectly (see [Mauri 2008a](#) and [2008b](#) for the crucial role of irrealis in marking alternativity). Readers can verify this point by checking that the irrealis markers in each can be substituted by a conventional symmetric ‘either or’ (e.g. ‘either prepartum or postpartum’, ‘either God or the gods...’, ‘either hosted by someone or in a hotel’) without a change in interpretation.¹³

10.3.3 Economy motivates loss of markedness and expressivity

[Sections 10.3.1](#) and [10.3.2](#) analysed alternativity constructions marked for asymmetry and symmetry (respectively). All of these exemplify the working of one of the relevant competing motivations, namely the drive for expressivity. This section presents examples for the competing power of economy, which accounts for the loss of expressivity, accompanied by processing simplification and loss of formal markedness. We observe this for both symmetric and asymmetric constructions.

Starting with symmetric constructions, doubly marked constructions as in (15) and (16) are dedicated to symmetric stance. But degree of resonance plays a role too. This is why a weakening of symmetric markedness can be observed when resonance is reduced, as in the following:¹⁴

- (18) a. ... **be it** economic development, **be it** equal opportunities policies,
 (BNC¹⁵)
 b. ... **be it** right, **or be it** wrong (BNC)
 c. ... **be it** public **or** private. (BNC)

Although even (18c) exhibits a symmetric syntactic structure, the parallelism between the two alternatives is less salient here due to the lower resonance. Resonance is highest in the correlative structure in (a) and lowest in (c) (singly marked ‘or’ constructions, which lack resonance, are indeed neutral, rather

¹³ But Choice questions as in (16b) cannot accommodate *either... or* ([Moravcsik 1971](#)).

¹⁴ See a similar shift from a resonating correlative Hebrew disjunction [*bein X (u.)vein Y*] ‘whether X (and) whether Y’ to [*bein X o Y*] ‘whether X or Y’ in [Bardenstein and Ariel \(2024\)](#).

¹⁵ BNC (British National Corpus).

than symmetrically stanced constructions, despite their syntactic symmetry). Now, most likely all doubly marked disjunctions indicate a symmetric stance, but we propose that symmetric stance is more prominently conveyed in (a) and least so in (c). (c) represents a loss in expressivity (symmetry is rather backgrounded), accompanied by a more economical, less marked form.

Moving on to asymmetric constructions, we here underscore the contribution of collocations and subconstructions to economical communication. Fixed constructions reduce compositional computations (a reduced processing effort), at the same time contributing to bleaching. First, as mentioned above, we propose that ['or' + S adverbial + 'alternative'] constitutes a general strategy for expressing asymmetric disjunctions. The clause-level adverbial modifies the applicability of just one of the relevant alternatives, thereby creating a differential status for the listed alternatives (see [Section 10.3.1](#)). Indeed, all 17 *or* + *-ly* sentence adverb strings in SBC and LSAC indicate asymmetric alternativity (there was a total of 81 *-ly* adverbs).¹⁶

Crucially, Italian data show that non-optimality asymmetry is not only the most frequent one but also the one that shows the more significant number of collocations ([Section 10.3.2](#), with 93/205 occurrences of *o comunque* 'or in any case, at least'). Furthermore, as will be argued in [Section 10.4.2](#), it is precisely the 'or at least' sequence in ancient Italian (*o pure*) that developed into a neutral 'or' construction in modern Italian (*oppure*). The same is true for the Hebrew *o shema* 'or is it possibly the case?' and *o ulay* 'or maybe', each of which is associated with its own discourse profile and specific reading. Indeed, [Becker and Katzir \(2018\)](#) suggested that at least some of them are at least approaching what we call neutral-stance status. We next examine more advanced cases.

Based on HeTenTen, Hebrew *lexilufin* 'alternatively' is twice as likely to co-occur with *o* 'or' than alone (14,198 vs. 6,794 tokens). The occurrence of Hebrew *shema* 'is it possibly the case?' is more or less equally divided between bare cases (26,655) and the 'or' collocation (26,859). However, only a minority (21 per cent) of bare *shemas* are actually used to mean the relevant 'is it possibly the case?' (75 per cent mean 'lest').¹⁷ Extrapolating from this ratio, we deduce that *o shema* is 4.8 times more frequent than the relevant bare *shema*.¹⁸ We conclude that *o shema* and *o lexilufin* have evolved into a single composite modifier of the second alternative.

¹⁶ This search ignores cases where the adverbial doesn't immediately follow *or*, as well as cases where the adverbial does not end in *-ly* (e.g. *perhaps, otherwise*). A search for *or more* (83 tokens) revealed one *or more precisely* and one *or more importantly*, both asymmetric (REPAIRS).

¹⁷ Based on 100 random bare *shema* in HeTenTen. Four tokens are irrelevant.

¹⁸ Cf. with 882 times more bare *yitaxen* 'possibly' than *o yitaxen* 'or possibly' and 23.6 times more *ulay* 'maybe' than *o ulay* 'or maybe'. In English (based on SBC + LSAC), it is *maybe* that leads over *probably, perhaps*, and *possibly* (there are only 35 *maybes* for each *or maybe*). It's noteworthy that *or maybe* constitutes 4.2 per cent of *or* constructions (as compared with 0.03–0.06 per cent for the three other dubitatives). The corpus only contained one *or alternatively* out of three *alternatively* tokens.

The same is true for English *or else*, with connective *else* now obsolete (OED (*Oxford English Dictionary*)).

Summing up, [Section 10.3.1](#) showed the working of expressivity in potential dedicated-asymmetric constructions. [Section 10.3.2](#) exemplified how expressivity potentially triggers dedicated-symmetric constructions. [Section 10.3.3](#) showed the working of the competing motivation of economy, which accounts for the loss of expressivity (symmetric as well as asymmetric stances).

10.4 Cyclic diachronic changes in alternativity constructions

[Section 10.3](#) analysed synchronic strategies used to increase or decrease expressivity with respect to (a)symmetric ‘or’ constructions in an ad hoc manner, typically increasing or decreasing their formal markedness as a result. It analysed local motivations for single-step changes (either for increased expressivity or for increased economy), pointing to the communicative reality behind the components which make up a complete diachronic cycle. [Section 10.4](#) focuses on grammaticized products of the cumulative applications of the local processes described in [Section 10.3](#), thus outlining whole diachronic cycles. We here cite evidence for three complete diachronic cycles of change between symmetric, neutral, and asymmetric constructions for alternativity constructions:

- (19) a. Hebrew *o* ‘if/or’:
- i. Symmetry > Neutral (Biblical Hebrew, between 1000 BC and early AD times)
 - ii. Neutral > Symmetry (Mishnaic Hebrew, partially overlaps with Late Biblical Hebrew, but ending in the early part of the third century AD)
 - iii. Neutral > Asymmetry (Current Hebrew)
- b. Italian *oppure* ‘or purely/or’:
- i. Neutral > Asymmetry (already attested in the 14th century)
 - ii. Asymmetry > Neutral (attested from the 16th century)
 - iii. Neutral > Asymmetry (attested from the 19th century)

10.4.1 Hebrew *o* ‘if/or’

Our first case study shows (i) a symmetric discourse pattern (where alternativity is inferred) giving rise to (ii) a conventional neutral ‘or’ construction, which later on serves as the basis for (iii) a renewed symmetric ‘or’ construction, a conventional

one this time. Biblical Hebrew shows many stage (i) cases, where a symmetric alternativity relation is inferred from a correlative construction, where each alternative is introduced with its own irrealis marker:

(20) Phase I (Biblical Hebrew, Symmetric):

[(Irrealis X) (Irrealis Y)]

We already cited such examples in (16) above, with *im* ‘if’ and with *ha* ‘question particle’. The following construction involves *o* ‘if’ (at the time) as the reduplicated irrealis marker:¹⁹

- (21) *o ben o bat yigaX ka.mishpat haze yeʕase*
 If son if daughter will.gore as.judgment this shall.be.done
lo. (Exodus 21, 31)
 to.him.

‘Whether he has gored a son, **or** has gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him’ (Lit. ‘if... if...’).

The highly resonating parallel structures in (16) and in (21) create a bias for an inferred alternativity relation between the explicit options. In due course, however, speakers associated this [(If X) (if Y)] construction with two analyses:

- (22) Bridging phase: a. (Symmetric): [(If X) (**If** Y)]
 b. (Neutral): [(If) (X **or** Y)]

Adopting the (b) reanalysis, speakers drew a distinction between the initial marker, which retained its purely irrealis meaning, and the subsequent irrealis marker, which took on a procedural alternativity meaning. (21) is actually a bridging context case, which can be paraphrased as the symmetric ‘whether X, whether Y—Z’ or as a neutral ‘if X or Y—Z’. Note that in the neutral reading neither connective scopes only over the immediate clause it’s in. Rather, the subsequent *o*, now ‘or’, scopes over the two options, and their conjunction falls under the scope of the initial *o* ‘if’.

Once the initial irrealis marker is not necessarily *o*, resonance is drastically reduced, and with it the salience of a symmetric construction:²⁰

¹⁹ We here ignore the question of construction compactness (cf. the compact (16a) and (28) with the non-compact (16b)). We address this question in Mauri and Ariel (in prep.).

²⁰ The verse in (23) is after all interpreted symmetrically, but due to inference (this is a Choice construction). Recall that neutral constructions may be interpreted either symmetrically or asymmetrically (see again example (6)).

- (23) *Ha.tov heyotxa kohen le.veit ish eXad o heyotxa*
 QP.good your.being priest to.house.of man one or your.being
kohen le.shevet...
 priest to.tribe...
 ‘Is it (lit. ‘*Ha* “question particle”) better for thee to be a priest unto the
 house of one man, *o* (or) that thou be a priest unto a tribe’ (*Judges* 18:19)

Following *any* initial irrealis marker, *o* ‘or’ can now introduce an ‘or’ meaning by convention. This is a pre-phase II neutral ‘or’ construction:

- (24) Pre-phase II (Neutral): [(Irrealis) (X or Y)]

Note that the overwhelming majority of *o* ‘or’ examples in the Bible instantiate this pre-phase II, where an obligatory irrealis marker is present in the utterance ([Kupersmidt 2021](#)). But *o* ‘or’ was eventually liberated, participating in the more general neutral construction of Phase II (25), as shown in (26):

- (25) Phase II (Biblical Hebrew, Neutral): [X or Y].

- (26) *ke.alpaim ish o ki.shloshet alafim ish yaʕalu*
 About.two.thousand men or about.three thousand men will go.up
 (Joshua 7, 3)

To find the later evolution of a symmetric Phase III, we must switch to Mishnaic Hebrew, where we can identify:

- (27) Phase III (Symmetric): [**Or** X **or** Y]

In light of our argument in [Section 10.3.2](#), it’s not surprising that in order to express a symmetric stance specifically, a resonating parallel construction once again evolved:

- (28) *O mefakpek o notel aXat mi.bentaim*
 Either shakes or removes one for.the.time.being. (*Succa*, 1, 7)

Next, the cyclic change shown in (29) differs from the one in (27) in that instead of evolving a Phase III symmetric construction out of the neutral one, an asymmetric construction was initiated:

- (29) Phase IV (Asymmetric): [X **or** S **adverbial** Y].

We have analysed such Hebrew constructions in [Section 10.3.1](#). Here is a Modern Hebrew example:

- (30) *taamti xatif yapani mushlam, lama ein kaze*
 I.tasted snack Japanese perfect, why there.isn't like.this
ba.arec o le.xilufin lama ani lo be.yapan?
 in, the.country or alternatively why I not in.Japan?

I tasted a perfect Japanese snack, why isn't there one like that in Israel **or alternatively** why am I not in Japan? (www.tiktok.com/@hatifimnews/video/7090184374691532033)

10.4.2 Italian *oppure* ‘or’

Our second case study (31) shows a four-stage process involving (i) a grammaticized *neutral* construction (*o* ‘or’) that at some point starts to be frequently specified by *pure* ‘only/simply’, giving rise to (ii) an *asymmetrical* ‘or’ construction (*o pure* ‘or only/simply’), which is in turn soon unverbated and reanalysed as (iii) a renewed *neutral* ‘or’ construction (*oppure* ‘or’), readily available for further specifications within (iv) new *asymmetrical* constructions (*oppure anche (solo)* ‘or even only’):²¹

- (31) Phase I (Neutral): X *o* Y
 Phase II (Asymmetrical): X *o pure* / *oppure* Y
 Phase III (Neutral): X *oppure* Y
 Phase IV (Asymmetrical): X *oppure anche (solo)* Y

We find some rare occurrences of Phase II already in the 14th century (cf. Restivo 2022: 85), as can be observed in (32):

- (32) *Che le decte cose commettesse, o pur alcuna d'esse.*
 That DEF said things commit:SUBJ:3SG or simply some of them
 That he committed the aforementioned things, **or at least** some of them. (Statuto dell'Università ed Arte della Lana di Siena. Addizioni e aggiunte, 69, 1298–1309)

These first occurrences of the sequence *o pure* are characterized by a scalar context, in which the first alternative occupies a higher position than the alternative introduced by *pure*, which is used with a scalar restrictive value and means ‘simply, at least’. Interestingly, the scale frequently involves quantities, as in (32) and (33). Example (33) provides another interesting case in point, in which *o pure* is employed to translate the Latin source *aut certe*, meaning ‘or at least’ (Restivo 2022: 85–86):

²¹ For the diachronic analysis of Italian *oppure*, we used the MIDIA (D'Achille and Grossman 2017) corpus, the OVI corpus of Ancient Italian, the CORIS corpus of written Italian (https://corpora.ficlit.unibo.it/coris_eng.html), and the KIParla corpus of spoken Italian (Mauri et al. 2019).

- (33) *E però che oggimai era tempo di menare l' oste fuori*
 and since by:then it.was time to take the army out
di Sannia, tennero consiglio, se ne le dovessero
 of Sannia hold:PST:3PL advice if from.there them must:SUBJ:3PL
menare amendue, o pur l' una solamente.
 withdraw both or at least the one only.

And since by then it was time to withdraw the army from Samnious, they consulted whether they had to withdraw both, **or at least just one**. (Filippo di Santa Croce, *Deca prima di Tito Livio volgarizzata*, L. 10, cap. 44, 1323)

As argued by Restivo (2022: 86), during the 14th century we find the first rare occurrences of the unverbated form *oppure*, still retaining an asymmetrical stance and the scalar meaning 'or at least'. Univerbation was likely a consequence of the high frequency with which the sequence *o pur(e)* was used. Example (34) shows an occurrence of *oppure* linking two alternatives that are located along a scale: everything is indeed presented as the first alternative, followed by the weaker option; namely, if not everything then at least the most remarkable of its facts.

- (34) *Se io volessi ogni cosa contare, oppure le più*
 If I want:SUBJ:1SG every thing tell or.at.least the more
notabili de' suoi fatti, e' non ci basterebbe il tempo.
 remarkable of its facts it NEG 1PL.DAT suffice:3SG the time
 If I wanted to tell you everything, or the most remarkable of its facts, time would not be enough. (Giovanni Boccaccio, *Corbaccio*, 1354–1355)

It is from the 15th century, and increasingly during the 16th and 17th centuries, that the form *oppure* starts to be systematically attested as a *neutral* 'or' construction, thus entering Phase III (cf. (31)). As we can see in example (35), *oppure* is indeed employed to convey alternativity without any specific stance, as a synonym of *o* 'or', and the two alternatives are not located on a scale, but rather refer to opposite scenarios (i.e. written vs. oral answer):

- (35) *Ditemi, hanno forse scritto indietro, oppure v' hanno*
 tell:me AUX:3PL perhaps written back or 2PL.DAT AUX:3PL
fatta la risposta a bocca?
 made the answer by mouth
 Tell me, did they write back, or did they give you the answer orally?
 (Pietro Fortini, *Le giornate delle novelle dei novizi*, II, 8, 1530–1540)

Since univerbation preceded the reanalysis of *oppure* as a neutral 'or' construction, we deem it plausible that it played some role in it, triggering the bleaching of the originally compositional semantics of the construction and ultimately leading

to a unified, general reinterpretation as ‘or’. Actually, the texts show that speakers may have been aware of the complex origin of *oppure* for some centuries due to the independent and highly productive use of the adverb *pure* in Italian. We indeed still find some fluctuation in how the form is written up to the 18th century, with occurrences of neutral *oppure* alternating with occurrences of neutral *o pure*, which means ‘or’ despite the orthographic separation of the adverb, as in (36):²²

- (36) *Io vi dimando, se quei Reverendi Padri stimarono per*
 I 2PL.DAT ask if those Reverend Fathers esteemed as
vere Le cose mie, o pur l’ ebber per false.
 true the things my:PL or it have:PST:3PL as false
 I ask you whether those Reverend Fathers esteemed my issues to be true,
 or whether they held them to be false. (Galileo Galilei, *Il saggiaiore*, cap.
 5, 1623)

Therefore, what we observe is first an asymmetry-marked construction *o pure* ‘or at least’, reanalysed as an asymmetry-unmarked (univerbated) connective *oppure*, keeping its scalar meaning. Then, once the univerbated connective *oppure* became more stable in usage, it lost its asymmetrical stance and started functioning as a neutral unmarked ‘or’ construction, linking unstanced alternatives.

Yet, the story does not end here. As soon as *oppure* turned into a neutral ‘or’ construction, it became available for further analytical stance specifications (Phase IV). Among the complex asymmetrical *oppure* constructions attested in the KIParla corpus of contemporary spoken Italian, the most frequent are *oppure magari* ‘or perhaps’ and *oppure anche (solo)* ‘or even (only)’. In (37) we can see the sequence *oppure anche solo magari* ‘or even only perhaps’, which conveys a speaker’s strongly asymmetrical stance:

- (37) BO074: [...] *ci siam sempre trovati per fare tipo dei*
 1PL AUX:1PL always met to do like INDEF.PL
giochi principalmente dei giochi di società
 games mainly INDEF:PL board.games
oppure anche solo magari per bersi una
 or even only perhaps to drink:REFL INDEF
birra o fare quattro chiacchiere
 beer or do four chats

BO074: [...] eh or we have always met to play like games mainly board games or even just to drink a beer or have a chat here. (KIParla corpus)

²² It must be noted that *pure* is widely used in contemporary Italian with the meaning ‘also’, and it occurs as part of a number of connectives: beyond *oppure*, we have *seppure* ‘even if’, *eppure* ‘nonetheless’, and *neppure* ‘neither’. For a detailed discussion of the diachronic evolution of the adverb *pure* in Italian, see Restivo (2022).

The path followed by *oppure* thus looks like a full cycle, shifting from neutral to asymmetrical, then back to neutral again. More specifically, we observe an unmarked neutral construction *o* develop into a marked asymmetrical construction *o pure*, which then evolves into an unmarked asymmetrical construction *oppure*, and finally to an unmarked neutral construction again. Crucially, once the neutral construction *oppure* is entrenched, it becomes readily available for new specifications towards an asymmetrical stance. The cyclic diachronic shifts here analysed reflect very clearly the dynamic tension between expressivity and economical motivations, which works as the fuel keeping the engine going along the ‘or’ cycle. We thus have a Neutral > Asymmetrical > Neutral > Asymmetrical cycle.

10.5 Conclusions

Figure 10.1 is a schematic representation of the ‘or’ cycle we argue for in this chapter, whereby speakers oscillate between increased expressivity (calling for dedicated constructions for (a)symmetric stance) and increased economy (calling for a single, neutral-stance construction). It shows an alternation between unmarked constructions, neutral (unspecified) for stance, and dedicated constructions, marked for (a)symmetric stance. Because of layering, however, old constructions may be retained, so languages may have both neutral and symmetric and asymmetric dedicated ‘or’ constructions. This is certainly the case for English, Hebrew, and Italian, which we have discussed above.

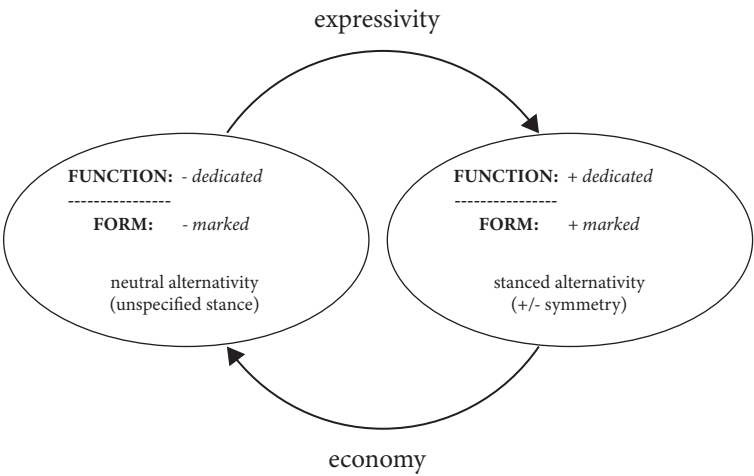


Figure 10.1 The ‘or’ cycle.

As became clear from the cycles we discussed, we observe a correlation between non-markedness and non-dedicated constructions (i.e. neutral ones) on the one

hand and markedness and dedicated constructions (i.e. symmetric or asymmetric stanced alternativity) on the other. However, as the Italian cycle shows, in the transition phases we may find originally marked constructions being reanalysed as unmarked connectives but still retaining a dedicated semantics for some time (cf. example (33)). Conversely, we do find marked constructions developing a non-dedicated, thus neutral, alternativity function, which ultimately drives a compactization leading to non-markedness (see again examples (21) and (23) from Biblical Hebrew; cf. also the neutral *o pure* occurrences, as in (35)). In other words, the most typical situations are those in which we find [+ marked, + dedicated] constructions, as a consequence of expressivity, and [-marked, -dedicated] constructions, as a consequence of economy. In the transition phases, we observe also [+marked, -dedicated] and [-marked, +dedicated] constructions, which are, however, likely to be unstable and bound to be attracted towards one direction or the other.²³

However, it's important to remember that cyclic change is in fact a linguists' metaphor (Hansen 2020), albeit an informative one. Language change does not follow a perfectly abstract trajectory as Figure 10.1 portrays it. It results from a series of functionally motivated local goals. Specifically, the component shifts involved in the cycle are each independently functionally motivated (see Rupp and Tagliamonte 2019, *inter alia*). For example, symmetric stance is motivated because it supports both EXHAUSTIVE readings ('no alternatives beside X and Y should be considered') and indifferent readings ('it doesn't matter whether X is the case or if Y is the case'). Indeed, each of these readings builds on the fact that the speaker adopts the same stance towards both alternatives. Asymmetric constructions naturally arise to meet speakers' need to point to a differential stance towards the explicit alternatives, despite the fact that alternatives are by definition equivalent to one another. This stance differential stems from any one of many different motivations, be they epistemic, attitudinal, cognitive, or interactional (see Section 10.3.1 again). The evolved markers are then chosen according to the specific intended motivation (cf., e.g. *or alternatively*, *or actually*, *or if not*). At the same time, alternativity constructions unspecified for a specific stance are also functionally motivated. Speakers do not always wish to explicitly indicate their differential stance, even if they have one, because it's not communicatively important, or it can be easily inferred. In fact, in light of the overwhelming majority of neutral constructions in SBC, we propose that 'neutral alternativity' is a 'heavy recruiter' (Hansen 2020). It is also the source of both symmetric and asymmetric constructions. Note that symmetric constructions cannot shift to being asymmetric in one step (and vice versa) because this would entail an intermediate contradictory construction (marked for both symmetry and asymmetry). Erb and Ariel

²³ We thank an anonymous reviewer for prompting us to consider a binary organization of the two parameters of markedness and dedicated function.

(this volume) argue for a similar tendency to turn marked possessive constructions unmarked via a process they term prototypicalization.

We have tried to emphasize that it is not just functions that are well motivated. So are the means mobilized for conveying those functions. Heightened resonance of parallel syntactic structures supports symmetry (procedurally), while adverbials modifying just one of the alternatives support asymmetry. More generally, marked forms are associated with the more expressive dedicated constructions (bearing either symmetric or asymmetric stance), while unmarked forms tend to be associated with neutral-stance constructions. Finally, and most importantly, we argued that the cyclic patterning observed for alternativity constructions results from an ongoing competition between expressivity and economy, as realized by local pragmatic motivations.

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PART II

CYCLIC CHANGE IN DISCOURSE

A new look at grammaticalization versus pragmaticalization in the rise of pragmatic markers

A typology of linear and non-linear forms of evolution

Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen

11.1 Introduction

In this chapter I address the diachronic evolution of pragmatic markers (henceforth PMs) with a focus on what I call linear versus non-linear forms of pragmaticalization.

The rise of PMs has been an increasingly popular research topic for more than three decades. The pathway that has hitherto been most frequently attested involves linguistic items or constructions that originally have truth-conditional meaning and belong to ‘core’ grammar, but which more or less gradually evolve non-truth-conditional, more (inter)subjective, uses that lie outside core grammar. This form of evolution is widely assumed to be regular, more or less unidirectional, and thus fundamentally linear in nature. Saliently, the study of such cases has been used to argue for a redefinition of the notion of grammaticalization (e.g. [Traugott 1995](#)).

The literature has, however, reported examples of markers that appear to have taken more complex, non-linear, paths at the semantic-pragmatic and/or syntactic level. Such paths include, but are not limited to, the cyclical ones described by Ghezzi and Molinelli ([2014a](#)) and by [Hansen \(2014, 2018a/b, 2020a\)](#).

This chapter argues that because of the existence of such non-linear paths, it is unhelpful to subsume the rise of PMs under the concept of grammaticalization. Nor is it preferable—as [Traugott \(2022\)](#) suggests—to use the broader notion of ‘constructionalization’, which precludes a systematic account of the different ‘directions of travel’ that a given marker may take in the course of its evolution (see further [Section 11.2.1.2](#) below). Instead, in order to arrive at a descriptively more

adequate model, I argue in [Section 11.2](#) below that it is useful to draw on a distinction between grammaticalization, pragmaticalization (cf. [Erman and Kotsinas 1993](#); [Dostie 2004](#)), and lexicalization.

In [Section 11.3](#), I propose a typology of forms of pragmaticalization, which—besides what I have called ‘linear’ pragmaticalization above ([Section 11.3.1](#)), which appears to be typical of the evolution of discourse markers (DMs)—includes the following four non-linear (or in the case of feature spirals, quasi-non-linear) forms:

- (i) Grammatico-pragmaticalization ([Section 11.3.2.1](#)). This form of pragmaticalization will be argued to be characteristic of so-called modal particles (MPs), a subcategory of PMs that is only found in a (possibly relatively restricted) subset of languages.
- (ii) Pragmaticalization-to-lexicalization spirals ([Section 11.3.2.2](#)).
- (iii) Micro-cycles of pragmaticalization ([Section 11.3.2.3](#)). This category will be shown to comprise two subtypes, namely onomasiological cycles ([Section 11.3.2.3.1](#)) versus semasiological cycles ([Section 11.3.2.3.2](#)).
- (iv) Feature spirals ([Section 11.3.2.4](#)).

The proposed typology is based on attested patterns of evolution, prominently involving interaction between, on the one hand, two levels of meaning, and on the other hand, two levels of grammar. The distinction between these levels is set out in [Section 11.2.2](#). Crucially, in [Section 11.2.3](#), I propose to amend the definition of pragmaticalization so as to see it as first and foremost a change in the relevant level of meaning, a change that often, but not necessarily, occurs in correlation with a change in (morpho)syntactic behaviour. Grammaticalization, on the other hand, is defined with reference to (morpho)syntactic behaviour. This means that the two forms of change may in principle be combined in the evolution of a given item or construction.

11.2 Paths of language change

Instances of language change by definition involve a particular path taken by the item or construction undergoing change. In this chapter, I will draw a basic distinction between ‘macropaths’ and ‘micropaths’.

Macropaths are high-level paths of significant generality which therefore pertain to large numbers of specific instances of change across languages. Thus, when we say, for instance, that a given construction has changed from being part of the lexicon to being part of grammar, or from playing a role at the level of sentence grammar to playing a role at the level of discourse, we are describing macropaths.

Micropaths are far more specific paths, identified at a comparatively low level of granularity, which only pertain to a very limited number of constructions within any given language, and which are not necessarily regularly replicated across languages (although such replication can, and does, happen). Examples of micropaths would be, for instance, an anterior temporal marker evolving into a marker of subjective preference (see [Section 11.3.2.3](#) for a concrete example) or a construction consisting of demonstrative + copula developing a new use as a reformulation marker (see [Section 11.2.1](#) for an example).

11.2.1 Three types of macropaths

The literature on PMs suggests that three macropaths are or may be of relevance to this type of expressions, namely pragmaticalization, lexicalization, and grammaticalization.

Pragmaticalization, a term first coined by [Erman and Kotsinas \(1993\)](#), is undoubtedly the least widely known—and, as we will see in [Section 11.2.1.2](#) below, also the most controversial—of the three. The term designates the creation of PMs on the basis of existing content words or grammatical items/constructions. Thus, for instance, the fact that the French adjective *bon* ('good') (cf. (1)) has developed—among others—a discourse-level use in which it marks topic change ([Hansen 1998a](#): 232), as in (2), is an example of pragmaticalization, according to the above (initial) definition:

- (1) *Ce plat est vraiment bon!*

'This dish tastes really good!'

- (2) [At the end of a discussion] *Bon, et si on allait prendre un verre?*

'Right, how about we go for a drink?'

Similarly, uses of the Spanish subject + verb combination *esto es* ('this/that is'), which consists of a demonstrative pronoun followed by a copula, to mark reformulation, as in (4), are pragmaticalized in comparison to 'literal' uses like that in (3):¹

- (3) *Esto es un libro.*

'This is a book.'

¹ Note that the focus of this chapter is on pragmaticalization, lexicalization, and grammaticalization as *paths* of change. The typology proposed here is therefore independent of the question of the mechanisms and motivations of change involved. Thus, while [Pons Bordería \(2006\)](#) argues convincingly that the reformulative use of *esto es* is a Medieval *calque* from Latin *id est*, the reformulation marker is still pragmaticalized in comparison to 'literal' uses of the demonstrative + copula construction.

- (4) *Antes se trataba de persuadir, esto es, de conducir al interlocutor por una senda dialéctica.* (Zorraquino and Portolès 1999, cited in Pons Bordería 2006: 181)

‘Before, it was about persuading, that is, about steering the hearer along a dialectic path.’

The concept of lexicalization (as a diachronic phenomenon) has a longer history (cf. Brinton and Traugott 2005). It designates the creation of new content words, typically on the basis of one or more existing lexemes, but also sometimes on the basis of grammatical items/constructions, or—as we will see in Section 11.3.2.2 below—occasionally on the basis of PMs. Thus, the formation of the English noun *breakfast* from the combination *break*_V + *fast*_N, or the nominalization of the derivational suffix *-ism*, as in (5), are textbook examples of lexicalization:

- (5) A new era demands new ‘isms’. (<https://instituteforglobalaffairs.org/2018/09/a-new-era-demands-new-isms>)

Finally, grammaticalization (Meillet 1921[1912]: 133) is no doubt the most widely studied of the three macropaths. Here, we find the creation of new function words and grammatical constructions out of pre-existing lexical and/or grammatical material. A prominent example of grammaticalization is the creation of the Modern French postverbal clause negator *pas*, as in (6), from the noun *pas* ‘step’ (cf. (7)), presumably via a stage in which the noun functioned as a minimizer in constructions with the preverbal clause negator *ne*, which is inherited from Latin.

- (6) *Je n’ai pas faim.*
‘I’m not hungry.’

- (7) *Du sublime au ridicule, il n’y a qu’un pas.*
‘It’s just one step from the sublime to the ridiculous.’

Grammaticalization is a matter of degree, which can usefully be measured by a set of six parameters, with corresponding processes of change, proposed by Lehmann (1985) (cf. Table 11.1). Negative *pas* fulfils the criterion of (semantic) attrition, its meaning being considerably more abstract and broad than that of the noun *pas*; it has lost predicativity and no longer combines with other noun phrase constituents, both of which are signs of scope decrease; it bonds with the preverbal negator *ne* and with the negated verb form; and its syntagmatic position has become fixed.

Table 11.1 Parameters and processes of grammaticalization

	Weight	Cohesion	Variability
Paradigmatic axis	Integrity Process: attrition	Paradigmaticity Process: paradigmaticization	Paradigmatic variability Process: obligatorification
Syntagmatic axis	Scope Process: condensation	Bondedness Process: coalescence	Syntagmatic variability Process: fixation

The evolution of French *pas* may also serve to illustrate a distinction going back to Kuryłowicz (1975: 69) between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ grammaticalization. According to Kuryłowicz, grammaticalization may involve either an originally lexical item being recruited to a new function at the level of grammar (primary grammaticalization) or an already grammatical item or construction becoming even more grammatical (secondary grammaticalization). The evolution from the nominal use of *pas* in (7) to its use as a negator in (6) above is clearly a case of primary grammaticalization. The evolution of negative *pas* from Medieval (approximately up to and including the 16th century) to Classical French (approximately the 17th and 18th centuries) and beyond, on the other hand, is an instance of secondary grammaticalization: initially, postverbal negative *pas* was grammatically optional and marked a specific type of discourse context (Hansen 2009). It was, further, in competition with a small number of alternative markers, also of nominal—and minimizing—origin, principally *mie* (‘crumb’), *point* (‘point’), and *goutte* (‘drop’). Over the course of the Medieval period, however, the use of postverbal negation spreads across all basic clause negating contexts, becoming obligatory in all but a small handful of vestigial grammatical contexts (Hansen 2009). At the same time, the competing postverbal markers gradually become obsolescent, leaving *pas* as the principal exponent of ‘standard’ clause negation (Payne 1985: 198). Finally, along with the so-called negative concord items (NCIs) *personne* (‘nobody’), *rien* (‘nothing’), *aucun* (‘no[ne]’), and so on, *pas* becomes part of an increasingly restricted paradigm of clause negation markers in French. In this process of secondary grammaticalization, we thus observe a further increase of the degree of obligatorification, semantic attrition, and paradigmaticization to which *pas* is subject, compared to the primary grammaticalization stage.

11.2.1.1 Cycles of grammaticalization

From early on (von der Gabelentz 1901; Meillet 1921[1912]; Jespersen 1917), linguists have recognized that grammatical change may sometimes take a cyclic form. Working within an explicitly functional and discourse-oriented framework,

Givón (1979b: 209) describes what he calls ‘cyclic waves’ of grammaticalization as based on the cline in (8) below, where a given grammaticalizing element typically starts its journey by playing a role in the paratactic structuring of discourse, becomes grammaticalized (or ‘syntacticized’), but is then gradually formally reduced, potentially resulting in its disappearance:²

(8) Discourse > syntax > morphology > morphophonemics > zero

The cline in (8) thus illustrates the typical ‘life cycle’ of grammatical elements. But it implies more than that: once a grammatical element has entered the cline—and in particular once it is approaching the end of its life cycle—language users’ communicative needs may trigger its replacement by a different element at the discourse level, and that new element may in turn enter the grammaticalization cline. This results in a cycle of renewal.

Once more, the evolution of negation in Latin and its daughter language French provides a good illustration (Jespersen 1917: 4). As Table 11.2 shows, the standard clause negator has been cyclically renewed twice in the history of these languages, both times most plausibly as a result of combination with a minimizing element at the discourse level (the numeral *oenum* in Latin and the noun *pas* in French). In the case of Latin, the minimizer eventually fused with the older negator *ne* to form the phonetically stronger item *non*, which is directly inherited into Very Old French, where it quickly becomes phonetically reduced again and begins to be reinforced by postverbal *pas*, as described above. In French, the postverbal marker gradually takes over the function of the preverbal marker and has by now fully replaced it in certain varieties of the language.

Table 11.2 The negative cycle from Latin to French

Old Latin	<i>ne</i>	Verb	Ø
Old Latin (reconstructed)	<i>ne</i>	* <i>oenum</i> (‘one’)	Verb
Classical Latin/Very Old French (9th–11th century)	<i>non</i>	Verb	Ø
Very Old French	<i>ne</i>	Verb	Ø
Medieval French	<i>ne</i>	Verb	(<i>pas</i>)[‘step’]
Classical/Modern French	<i>ne</i>	Verb	<i>pas</i>
Contemporary informal spoken French	(<i>ne</i>)	Verb	<i>pas</i>
Contemporary informal spoken Québécois French	Ø	Verb	<i>pas</i>

² A more recent revised version of this chapter refers instead to diachronic ‘rise-and-fall cycles’ (Givón 2018a: 153).

As shown in the more recent literature (e.g. Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a; Hansen 2014, 2018a/b), cyclic developments of this type are found not only in grammaticalization but also in pragmaticalization. This will be discussed further in Section 11.3.2.3 below.

11.2.1.2 Controversy: is it useful to distinguish different macropaths?

It was mentioned above that the notion of pragmaticalization, and whether or not it is useful to distinguish it from grammaticalization, has been a subject of controversy in the literature. This controversy has its basis in the view—saliently defended by Elizabeth Traugott (e.g. 1995)—that PMs are not extra-grammatical, insofar as they cannot be used randomly or without constraint. The central argument is that if PMs demonstrably have a grammar, they must by implication be part of grammar, and if PMs are part of grammar, then the rise of a new PM is an instance of grammaticalization, and not of a distinct macropath called pragmaticalization.

This stance, however, leads to tension with Lehmann's (1985) classic parameters of grammaticalization, which—as noted by Waltereit (2002: 1005) and Hansen (2008: 59), for example—tend not to characterize PMs to a very large extent. Thus, with respect to their source items, PMs typically enjoy greater syntagmatic and paradigmatic variability, as well as wider and/or more variable scope; they usually do not belong to any clearly identifiable (semi-)closed paradigm, and their meanings are not so much semantically bleached as they are 'pragmatically strengthened' (Traugott 1988).

Traugott's response has been to redefine grammaticalization in such a way as to accommodate PMs, thereby making the notion of pragmaticalization theoretically and descriptively redundant. Thus, for her, grammaticalization is defined by pragmatic strengthening and scope expansion, and is often—indeed typically—further characterized by decategorialization, subjectification, and gradience (understood as indeterminate part-of-speech affiliation) of the grammaticalized expression, as well as by a gradual, rather than abrupt, unfolding of these properties (e.g. Traugott 1988, 1995; Tabor and Traugott 1998; Brinton and Traugott 2005, 25ff; see also the contributions in Degand and Simon-Vandenberghe 2011).

With respect to grammaticalization versus lexicalization, Brinton and Traugott (2005) argue that the borderline is at best fuzzy, and they list a series of parallels between these two macropaths, observing that some changes have been variously described as either grammaticalization or lexicalization in the literature.

Finally, in her most recent book from 2022, Traugott, who is now working within the framework of Diachronic Construction Grammar (Traugott and Trousdale 2013), argues in favour of replacing the idea of different macropaths with the sole mechanism of constructionalization, which can have a range of

different types of results (Traugott 2022: ch. 5). One of these is the creation of procedural expressions, a category which subsumes most PMs, but also most—if not all—grammatical words and expressions.

The view taken in the present chapter is, first of all, that the fact that categories (such as the three macropaths distinguished above) may have fuzzy borders does not mean that they cannot be meaningfully distinguished. Moreover, while the conflation of macropaths into one single category of constructionalization is theoretically elegant, it results in a descriptively impoverished model, which cannot account for intuitively and empirically different ‘directions of travel’ in language change in a principled way. Constructionalization is in my view better seen as an umbrella term subsuming different more specific types of change. For these reasons, the basic distinction between the three macropaths will be retained here.

At the same time, I am in full agreement with the position that PMs do have a grammar, and that they are, by the same token, part of grammar. In the following section, I will therefore propose some further distinctions, between two levels of meaning and two levels of grammar, which allow us to refine the definitions of the three macropaths in such a way as not only to preserve and reinforce their individual theoretical and descriptive relevance but also to show potential interactions between them that will help us distinguish and explain different subtypes of pragmatization.

11.2.2 Levels of meaning and levels of grammar

Starting with linguistic meaning, Hansen (2008: 16) proposes a distinction between content-level meanings and context-level meanings. Content-level meanings concern states-of-affairs (SoAs) and/or relations between them in a real or imagined world that is presented as external to the speech event itself. This type of meaning thus overlaps substantially, but is not identical to, the traditional notion of truth-conditional meaning. A salient example of how these two notions diverge is generalized scalar implicatures such as those conveyed by the use of the quantifier *some* rather than *all*. Consider A’s utterance in (9) below: by referring to ‘some of my students’, rather than ‘all of my students’ (or just ‘my students’), A will by default be heard as suggesting that not all of their students are fascinated by PMs. Indeed, by referring to ‘the rest’ in their reply, B is showing that they have derived just such an inference. This inference is clearly about an SoA that obtains in the ‘real’ (i.e. extra-discursive) world, and as such it represents a content-level meaning. However, it is not truth-conditional, as shown by the fact that A can felicitously reply in either of the ways shown in the third turn without contradicting themselves.

- (9) A. Some of my students find the study of pragmatic markers fascinating.—B. And what about the rest?—A. They don't see the point./Actually, I think they're all interested.

Context-level meanings, on the other hand, concern the attitudes of the discourse participants towards the talked-about SoAs, the relation of these SoAs to the discourse itself, and the relation of the SoAs and of the discourse participants to the wider discourse situation. The notion of context-level meaning therefore overlaps substantially—but again is not co-extensive—with that of non-truth-conditional meaning. An example of where they differ is in the treatment of epistemic constructions such as French *je pense* ('I think'), *je crois* ('I believe'), or *je trouve* ('I find') (Angot and Hansen 2021), and their equivalents in English and many other languages. These expressions are clearly truth-conditional (speakers may—and sometimes do—lie about what they think and believe), even if their truth or falsity is difficult to verify objectively. At the same time, however, the main communicative aim of using these expressions is not usually to assert that the speaker is cogitating, but rather to mark the speaker's subjective stance towards a given SoA. In these majority uses, the markers thus express context-level meanings.

With respect to grammar, a number of scholars have proposed a distinction between two levels, which are variously termed 'micro- vs macrosyntax' (Berrendonner 1990; Blanche-Benveniste et al. 1991: 113), 'microgrammar vs macrogrammar' (Haselow 2016: §2), and 'sentence grammar vs thetic grammar' (Heine et al. 2021). The distinctions made are very similar and nothing of substance hinges on the choice of terminology in this chapter. For that reason, and in order to acknowledge French linguistics as a precursor in this domain, I will retain the terms micro-syntax and macro-syntax. Thus, micro-syntax corresponds to the traditional conception of sentence grammar, characterized by strong (morpho)syntactic dependencies between items and constituents, whereas macro-syntax designates grammatical relations that go beyond those of the core clause or sentence. At the macro-syntactic level, we therefore find only weak (morpho)syntactic constraints on the constituents (in some cases amounting to mere preferences for certain syntactic positions), whose status is optional and typically parenthetical. Nevertheless, macro-syntactic items and constructions are subject to appropriateness constraints of various kinds. This makes macro-syntax the domain of most PMs, prominently including discourse markers, interjections, hesitation markers, and vocatives, as well as that of parenthetical clauses, appositions, and so on.

We can observe an empirical correlation between, on the one hand, micro-syntax and content-level meaning, and on the other hand, macro-syntax and context-level meaning. Importantly, however, these correlations are imperfect, as Sections 11.3.2.1–11.3.2.2 will show.

11.2.3 Amended definitions of the three macropaths

Given the distinctions made in [Section 11.2.2](#), we are now in a position to amend the definitions of the three macropaths given in [Section 11.2.1](#) as follows:

Pragmaticalization designates a change in the meaning of a given item or construction, such that it evolves from having content-level meaning to having context-level meaning.

Grammaticalization is defined by a change in grammatical behaviour. In primary grammaticalization, the item or construction moves from being a (lexical) content word to being a micro-syntactic function word. In secondary grammaticalization, it undergoes further integration into the micro-syntactic level, as measured by [Lehmann's \(1985\)](#) parameters (cf. [Section 11.2.1](#)).

Finally, in lexicalization, an item or construction evolves from having (i) a micro-syntactic function or (ii) a macro-syntactic function (cf. [Section 11.3.2.2](#) below)—in both cases with procedural meaning³—to being a content word; that is, with conceptual meaning (for the distinction between these two types of meaning, see [Blakemore 1987](#): 144). Content words have their central function at the micro-syntactic level, so in the type (ii) scenario, we observe a move from macro-syntax into micro-syntax along with the change from procedural to conceptual meaning.⁴

The fact that the macropaths are thus defined by different parameters means that they are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, as [Sections 11.3.2.1–11.3.2.2](#) of this chapter will show, they are able to combine in certain instances. This fact does not support the notion that the distinction between macropaths is theoretically and descriptively redundant. On the contrary, such a distinction allows us to propose a principled typology of some less common forms of change. It is to this that we now turn, focusing specifically on forms of pragmaticalization.

11.3 A typology of linear versus non-linear forms of pragmaticalization

In order to outline a typology of less common forms of pragmaticalization, it is useful to first consider the properties of what appears to be the most common, or unmarked, scenario. I call that scenario linear pragmaticalization.

³ Readers may wonder where that leaves instances such as *break fast* > *breakfast*, given that both the verb *break* and the noun *fast* have conceptual meaning. The criterion employed here is that, prior to lexicalization, the semantic relation between them is established by virtue of their syntactic relationship. The interpretation of the collocation *break fast* thus crucially involves procedural meaning.

⁴ A reviewer queries this, citing [Lehmann's \(2002: 9\)](#) example of the evolution of Vulgar Latin *de ex de* ('from out of') via the Old Spanish complex preposition *des de* to the Modern Spanish simple preposition *desde* ('since') as an instance of lexicalization involving only procedural meanings. To me, this is not lexicalization but rather secondary grammaticalization (cf. [Section 11.2.1](#) above), involving stepwise coalescence, phonological attrition (in the evolution from Vulgar Latin to Old Spanish), scope reduction, and integration into the sub-paradigm of prepositions with temporal meanings.

11.3.1 Linear pragmaticalization

In linear pragmaticalization, the evolution of the pragmaticalized expression always instantiates both of the first two clines (i.e. (a)–(b)) below. In addition, it typically also instantiates one or more of the clines in (c)–(e):

- (a) Content-level meaning > context-level meaning
- (b) Micro-syntax > macro-syntax
- (c) (More) conceptual meaning > (more) procedural meaning
- (d) (More) objective meaning > (more) (inter)subjective meaning
- (e) Truth-conditional meaning > non-truth-conditional meaning

Linear pragmaticalization is characteristic of most DMs. As we will see in [Section 11.3.2](#) below, that is not true for all types of PMs, so I begin this section with a quick review of the prototypical properties of DMs (e.g. [Hansen 1998a](#): chs. 3.2 and 4; [Detges and Waltereit 2009](#): 43–45; [Degand et al. 2013](#): §3.1; [Fedriani and Sansó 2017](#): §2).

The meanings of DMs are by definition a type of context-level meanings: DMs incorporate an (inter)subjective element, and are used to coordinate discourse activities and to negotiate and maintain coherence across utterances and turns. As shown by the square brackets added in (10)–(11) below, their scope tends to be variable: in (10), the DM *donc* scopes the following utterance as a whole, while the DM cluster *et puis alors* scopes the rest of the excerpt, including the dialogically co-constructed prepositional object *Akhénaten*. In (11), on the other hand, *enfin* and *disons* both scope constituents that are only parts of the utterance as a whole:

- (10) A. *e ils ont fait disparaître un tas de textes ou de choses qui la concernaient donc [y a des zones d'ombre là terribles], et puis alors [un truc/ on (n')a rien vu, dessus mais on a vu simplement au musée, c'est e: l'époque ils appellent ça L'HERESIE:: amarnienne, avec comment il s'appelle e:—B. Akhénaten]*
 A. 'er they destroyed a lot of texts and stuff concerning her so [there are some huge mysteries there], and then actually [one thing/we didn't see anything, on there but we just saw at the museum, that is er the period they call it the Amarnian HERESY, with what's his name er:—B. 'Akhenaten']
- (11) *Il est ... enfin, [pas bête]—disons, [limité].*
 'He's ... well, [not stupid]—[limited], let's say.'

At the same time, DMs belong to macro-syntax: they are not integrated into the core clause structure but will rather be parenthetical and often peripheral with respect to the core clause; they will typically be prosodically unintegrated, and

their position is often variable. As shown in (12), many DMs may even constitute utterances by themselves in some contexts.

- (12) A. *Il est bête, quand même.*—B. *M'enfin !*

A. 'He's pretty stupid.'—B. DM! ≈ 'I beg your pardon?!'

A straightforward example of a DM that has been subject to linear pragmaticalization is the French marker *à la rigueur* ('with severity' > 'in a strict sense' > 'if need be', henceforth *ALR*), as analysed by [Prévost and Fagard \(2018\)](#). In (13) below, we see the source meaning exemplified, and in (14)–(15), two different pragmaticalized uses of *ALR*.

- (13) *Punissez les à la rigueur.* (1508, from [Prévost and Fagard 2018: 223](#))

'Punish them with severity'.

- (14) *Ces paroles tendent à signifier quelque vérité ; mais elles sont, à la rigueur, indignes et impropres.* (1713, from [Prévost and Fagard 2018: 222](#))

'These words tend to convey some truth; but they are, strictly speaking, undignified and inappropriate.'

- (15) A. *hm et pis après voir au niveau du: du fric et tout 'fin voir j' sais pas si ça: ça s'équili:bre ou quoi déjà (.) qu'y en ait pas un qui mette plus que l'autre ou:—B. ben faut voir après à la rigueur dans ces cas-là c'qu'on peut faire c'est s'donner une somme par couple* (Corpus CLAPI 12a/31b)

A. 'hm and then later look at: at money matters and things you know look at I dunno whether it's: it's sort of even (.) that there's not one person who's paying more than the other or:—B. 'well then you need to look if need be in those cases what you can do is to give yourselves a sum of money per couple'

As summarized in [Table 11.3](#), the source meaning is that of a manner adverbial, describing an aspect of an SoA in the extra-discursive real or imagined world, hence *ALR* at Stage 1 expresses content-level meaning. As a manner adverbial, it is governed by the verb of the clause, thus functioning at the micro-syntactic level. Its meaning is conceptual, comparatively more objective, and truth-conditional. By Stage 2, on the other hand, *ALR* has come to express the speaker's stance towards a certain SoA (in the case of (14), their stance with respect to words spoken by a third party), which is a context-level type of meaning. As indicated by the punctuation, this use of the marker is parenthetical in nature; *ALR* is mobile with respect to its host utterance (the speaker might, for instance, have used the alternative word order *à la rigueur, ils sont indignes et impropres*), and it is likely that it would have constituted a separate tone unit if the example had been spoken. All of these are macro-syntactic properties. Stage 3, finally, represents

what Dostie (2004: 34) calls ‘polypragmaticalization’, viz. the not uncommon rise of one or more additional DM uses of an already pragmaticalized expression. In the case of *ALR*, there is continuity between Stages 2 and 3, inasmuch as the Stage-3 use also marks the speaker’s stance towards a given SoA. Although it differs semantically from the Stage-2 use, Stage 3 retains context-level meaning, as well as the macro-syntactic behaviour of its Stage-2 counterpart. In addition to this, the two pragmaticalized meanings are procedural, subjective, and non-truth-conditional. In sum, the evolution of *ALR* instantiates all of the clines in (a)–(e) above.

Table 11.3 The pragmaticalization of French *à la rigueur*

Stage 1 (13)	Stage 2 (14)	Stage 3 (15)
Content level	Context level	
Micro-syntax	Macro-syntax	

11.3.2 Non-linear pragmaticalization

Where linear pragmaticalization is characterized by a unidirectional and synchronized movement from content-level meaning to context-level meaning, and from micro-syntactic behaviour to macro-syntactic behaviour, non-linear pragmaticalization is a cover term for a set of marked scenarios, in which we find that change may put the levels of meaning and syntax out of sync and/or backwards movements on one or both clines may take place. In this chapter, I distinguish three main types of non-linear pragmaticalization, viz. grammatico-pragmaticalization; pragmaticalization-to-lexicalization spirals; and micro-cycles of pragmaticalization. Micro-cycles will be shown to have two subtypes. I also discuss a type of diachronic evolution of DMs that I call ‘feature spirals’, which—while it is essentially a form of linear pragmaticalization—nevertheless has features that are reminiscent of micro-cycles.

11.3.2.1 Grammatico-pragmaticalization

As its name suggests, this subtype of non-linear pragmaticalization combines pragmaticalization and grammaticalization, such that the expression first grammaticalizes and then pragmaticalizes without losing its micro-syntactic properties. In other words, in grammatico-pragmaticalization, the levels of meaning and grammar get out of sync insofar as the resulting PM has context-level meaning but behaves grammatically like a micro-syntactic item. This subtype is hypothesized to be of particular relevance to the class of MPs, a subtype of pragmatic markers which, in Europe, is found chiefly in the Continental Germanic languages, but which have been argued by many scholars to have identifiable, if less strongly grammaticalized (in particular paradigmaticized), counterparts in other languages, including the Romance family. Therefore, I first briefly outline

the central properties of MPs identified in the literature (e.g. Hansen 1998a: chs 3.2 and 4; Detges and Waltereit 2009: 43–45; Degand et al. 2013: §3.2; Fedriani and Sansó 2017: §4), showing how they most saliently differ from DMs in particular.

Like DMs, MPs express (inter)subjective context-level meanings. Unlike DMs, however, they are not so much used to manage the incremental construction of the discourse and to ensure its coherence as to serve to mark and manage the competing, and possibly conflicting, knowledge states and perspectives of the interlocutors, in some cases also involving third parties. Where—as we saw in Section 11.3.1—DMs have variable scope, that of MPs is fixed, taking in the host utterance as a whole, including both the proposition expressed and the social action it represents. Finally, unlike DMs, MPs are integrated into core clause structure; in other words, their grammatical behaviour is micro-syntactic and not macro-syntactic like that of most PMs. The criteria used to categorize MPs as micro-syntactic will be illustrated using the French MP *bien* (Hansen 1998b) as an example.

As shown by the contrasts in (16)–(18), prototypical MPs have a fixed position in the clause, usually in close proximity to the finite verb:

- (16) A. *Pourquoi tu oublies toujours d'acheter du dentifrice?*—B. *Mais j'en ai bien acheté, du dentifrice!*

A. 'Why do you always forget to buy toothpaste?'—B. 'But I DID (MP) buy toothpaste!'

- (17) **Bien j'en ai acheté.*

'MP I did buy some.'

- (18) **J'en ai acheté bien.*

'I did buy some MP.'

Moreover, MPs are typically syntactically restricted. Thus, the MP *bien* cannot occur in negative clauses or in imperatives (cf. (19)–(20)):

- (19) **Je n'en ai pas bien acheté.*

'I didn't MP buy any.'

- (20) **Achètes-en bien!*

'Buy some MP!'

At the prosodic level, MPs are typically unstressed and fully integrated, unlike DMs. This is what one would expect of a micro-syntactic item (Boye and Harder 2012: 12, 14). Thus, while (21) below is a possible utterance in French, the prosodically detached *bien* seen here is a DM, whose contribution to the overall meaning of its host utterance is quite distinct from that of the MP seen in (16). Finally, MPs cannot constitute utterances on their own; thus, the *bien* seen in (22) is the same *bien* as in (21) (i.e. the DM and not the MP):

(21) *Bien*, j'en ai acheté.

'Okay, I bought some.'

(22) A. *Je vais acheter du dentifrice.*—B. *Bien.*

A. 'I'll buy some toothpaste.'—B. 'Okay.'

Diachronically, the MP *bien* is the result of the stages seen in Table 11.4 (Detges and Waltreit 2009: 55; the use of *bien* as a DM is left out of consideration). Stages 1–2 are exemplified in (23)–(24), and Stage 3 in (16), partially repeated as (25) below.

Table 11.4 The grammatico-pragmaticalization of French *bien*

Stage 1 (23)	Stage 2 (24)	Stage 3 (25)
Lexicon (micro-syntax)	Micro-syntax (grammar)	
Content level		Context level

(23) *Pierre a failli mourir de la Covid, mais maintenant il va bien.*

'Pierre almost died of Covid, but now he's (doing) well.'

(24) *Cela m'a bien embarrassé.*

'That greatly embarrassed me.'

(25) *Mais j'en ai bien acheté, du dentifrice!*

'But I DID (MP) buy toothpaste!' [= contrary to what the hearer seems to believe]

As shown, Stage 1 *bien* is a manner adverb corresponding to the adjective *bon* 'good'. As such, it belongs to the lexicon and its grammatical behaviour

is micro-syntactic, given that it is directly governed by the verb of its host clause. In Stage 2, *bien* grammaticalizes into a degree adverb—that is, a micro-syntactic function word with content-level meaning—before developing, in Stage 3, its context-level—that is, pragmaticalized—use as an MP, in which it serves to flag a contrast between the speaker’s point of view regarding a particular SoA and that of another person, typically the hearer.⁵ At the level of its grammatical behaviour, however, the MP remains micro-syntactic, as argued above.

11.3.2.2 Pragmaticalization-to-lexicalization spirals

Where grammatico-pragmaticalization combines the macropaths of grammaticalization and pragmaticalization, pragmaticalization-to-lexicalization spirals combine two other macropaths, namely pragmaticalization followed by lexicalization. Similarly to grammatico-pragmaticalization, this results in a situation where the levels of meaning and grammar are no longer in sync.

An example of this type of evolution is the Spanish PM *dizque* (‘says that’ > ‘supposedly’ > ‘so-called’), as analysed by [Company Company \(2018: §4.4.1\)](#). [Table 11.5](#) summarizes the three stages of evolution, with illustrative examples given in (26)–(28).

Table 11.5 The pragmaticalization-to-lexicalization spiral of Spanish *dizque*

Stage 1 (26)	Stage 2 (27)	Stage 3 (28)
Micro-syntax (grammar)	Macro-syntax	Lexicon (micro-syntax)
Content level	Context level	

- (26) *En el cclxxxviii capitulo, que fue a los xxxv annos, dizque aviendo el rey don Ramiro contienda con el rey don Bermudo, [...] adolecio en Leon et morio.* (14th century—from [Company Company 2018: 374](#))

‘In the 288th chapter, in the 35th year of his reign, it [the book] says that when King Ramiro fought King Bermudo, [...] the former fell ill in Leon and died.’

- (27) A. *¿Como viven esta gente?*—B. *Dizque son artistas.* (20th century—from [Company Company 2018: 377](#))

A. ‘How do these people live?’—B. ‘Supposedly, they’re artists.’

⁵ [Detges and Waltereit \(2009: 55\)](#) adduce a particular type of context of use of the degree marker *bien* that plausibly explains the transition from Stage 2 to Stage 3.

- (28) *Los transeúntes viles, amparados por la dizque ley, ...* (20th century—from [Company Company 2018: 377](#))

‘The vile passers-by, protected by the so-called law, ...’

At Stage 1 (cf. (26)), the form *dizque* represents a combination of the third-person present indicative of the verb *decir* ‘to say’ followed by the complementizer *que* ‘that’. This combination, in which *diz* is a lexical verb and *que* a function word, both of which are micro-syntactic and function at the content level of meaning, is also—indeed, more commonly—found written as two separate words. (It is worth pointing out that Medieval Spanish did not yet have a standardized orthography.)

At Stage 2, the now fully fused form has become pragmaticalized as a sentence adverbial of the type known as attitudinal disjuncts ([Greenbaum 1969: ch. 5](#)). More specifically, Stage-2 *dizque* marks a sceptical stance vis-à-vis the felicity of stating with sincerity that ‘these people’ are artists. This is a context-level type of meaning. As *dizque* in this use as a disjunct is no longer subject to clause-level (morpho)syntactic dependencies and moves from a central to a peripheral—indeed, parenthetical—position within its host utterance, it has also become a macro-syntactic element. Its evolution from Stage 1 to Stage 2 is thus a straightforward case of linear pragmaticalization (cf. [Section 11.3.1](#)).

It is the evolution from Stage 2 to Stage 3 that turns *dizque* into a non-linearly pragmaticalized item. Its meaning contribution remains at the context level, expressing a sceptical subjective stance on the part of the speaker towards a particular SoA: in this use, *dizque* can be glossed as ‘[referent x has the property of being commonly but,] in the speaker’s view, erroneously termed [a y]’. However, in terms of its grammatical behaviour, it has gone backwards into micro-syntax, having become lexicalized as a pre-modifying adjective which structurally belongs not at the clause level but inside an NP, where it is governed by the head noun. As in grammatico-pragmaticalization, pragmaticalization-to-lexicalization spirals thus involve a stage where the level of meaning and the level of grammar are out of sync with one another. The two types of non-linear paths further have in common that they combine two of the three macropaths distinguished in [Section 11.2.1](#).

11.3.2.3 Micro-cycles of pragmaticalization

The notion of (micro-)cycles of pragmaticalization, or semantic-pragmatic cycles, originates in the work of Ghezzi and Molinelli (2014a) and Hansen (2014). Hansen (2020b: 168) describes such cycles as follows:

- A given linguistic expression *e* that originally has a content-level function may, from a certain point in time, develop one or more context-level functions, and thus become ‘pragmaticalized’.

- At some point, a new expression *e'* may begin to fulfil the content-level function originally associated with *e*. Depending on whether or not *e* has lost its source meaning, it may thus find itself in competition with or replaced by *e'* at the content level.
- In turn, *e'* may itself become pragmaticalized, developing context-level uses that strongly resemble those of *e*.
- Eventually, *e* may disappear from the language altogether, or at least find itself increasingly confined to specific genres or registers.

In other words, parallel to what happens in grammaticalization cycles (cf. [Section 11.2.1.1](#)), in a micro-cycle of pragmaticalization, some form of renewal of the item or construction in question takes place, first at the content level of meaning and subsequently at the context level, such that we see both backwards and forwards movement on the cline of pragmaticalization. [Hansen \(2020b, 168\)](#) notes further that, in some cases, more than two expressions may be involved in such a cycle, either within a given language or across a mother language and a daughter language, such that the same cycle is repeated with a new expression *e''*, and so forth.

Within the typology of forms of non-linear pragmaticalization proposed in this chapter, the difference between ‘cycles’ and ‘spirals’ (cf. [Section 11.3.2.2](#) above and [Section 11.3.2.4](#) below) thus rests on the following distinction: If the evolution in question involves renewal of the item or construction in question at the content level of meaning, it is a cycle. If, on the other hand, the item/construction gains and subsequently loses one or more particular properties that is/are closely associated with its initial pragmaticalization while remaining pragmaticalized, as in the case of Spanish *dizque*, which—as we saw in [Section 11.3.2.2](#)—first gained and subsequently lost macro-syntactic properties, we are dealing with a spiral.

Within the category of cycles of pragmaticalization, [Hansen \(2018a: 56; 2020b: 171f.\)](#) makes a distinction between onomasiological and semasiological cycles. In the former type, the renewing expression *e'* is etymologically unrelated to *e*, whereas in the latter type, *e* is renewed by a form with the same etymological origin. Here, we start by looking at the former and then move on to semasiological cycles in [Section 11.3.2.3.2](#).

11.3.2.3.1 Onomasiological micro-cycles of pragmaticalization

In an onomasiological micro-cycle, two different linguistic forms with very similar content-level source meanings successively take on very similar context-level meanings. [Tables 11.6–11.7](#) summarize the analogous developments undergone by the Old French marker *ainz* and its modern-day equivalent *plutôt*⁶

⁶ Both forms have a variety of spellings in Medieval French, across their different uses. In Modern French, on the other hand, we find a functional differentiation in the written (but not in the spoken)

(Hansen 2020a): in both cases, we see semantic extensions from marking temporal anteriority ((29) and (32)) to marking subjective preference ((30) and (33)) and ultimately correction (in (31) and (34)). At Stage 2, the tables describe the grammatical behaviour of both markers as ‘micro-/macro-syntactic’. This is because both *ainz* and *plutôt* are flexible with respect to their part-of-speech classification, such that they function, in some of their uses, as complex subordinating conjunctions in combination with the all-purpose subordinator *que*, while in others, they function as adverbs, although they convey the same meaning in both cases.

Table 11.6 The pragmaticalization of Old French *ainz*

Stage 1 (29)	Stage 2 (30)	Stage 3 (31)
Micro-syntax	Micro-/Macro-syntax	Macro-syntax
Content level	Context level	

(29) ...*ains que de chi me parte*... (13th century)

‘...before I leave here...’

(30) *Et les diz phisiciens li conseillierent que il ne mengast pas du poucin [...] ainçois tenist diete*. (14th century)

‘And these doctors advised him not to eat chicken [...] but rather to keep a diet.’

(31) *Mais depuis, la sottie de nous, / Ainçois du courtesan, l’a fait tourner en rouille*. (16th century)

‘But since then, our foolishness, or rather that of the courtier, has turned it to muck.’

Table 11.7 The pragmaticalization of Old/Modern French *plutôt*

Stage 1 (32)	Stage 2 (33)	Stage 3 (34)
Micro-syntax	Micro-/Macro-syntax	Macro-syntax
Content level	Context level	

(32) ...*que par poison elle avoit fait son pere morir pour parvenir plus tost a son heritage*. (1453)

‘...that she had poisoned her father in order to come into her inheritance sooner.’

channel, between the analytic comparative form *plus tôt*, which always conveys temporal anteriority, and the unverbated form *plutôt*, which is always a PM.

- (33) *O dieux begnins, ne veuillés revocquer / La vie des humains car il n'est (pas) temps, / Vueillés plustost par douceur les vocquer, ...* (1492)
 'Oh benevolent gods, please do not recall the lives of human beings for it is not time, please do rather call them gently.'
- (34) *Car mon intention n'est pas de dire qu'on n'a que faire de se garder de leurs cautelles, [...] ; plustost j'adverty et proteste qu'il n'y a nul venin de serpent si mortel;* (1550)
 'For my intention is not to say that there is no need to protect oneself against their cunning [...]; rather, I warn and declare that there is no serpent's venom so deadly.'

When the evolution of each of the two markers is considered individually, we are evidently dealing with linear clines of polypragmaticalization of the type seen in Section 11.3.1. These two clines are graphically represented in Figure 11.1.

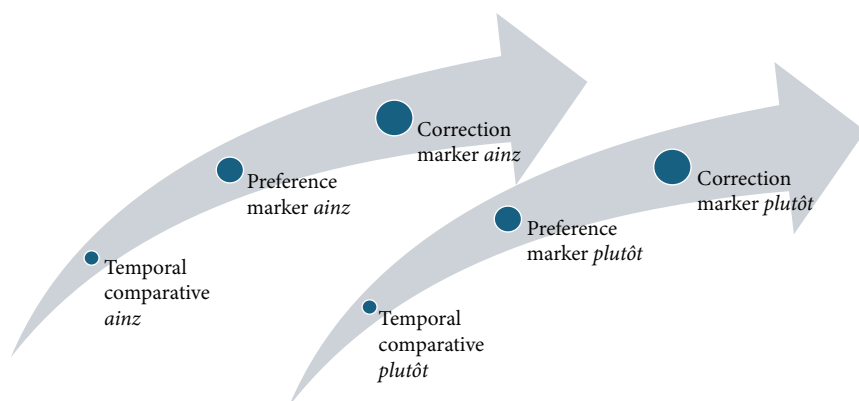


Figure 11.1 The polypragmaticalization clines of French *ainz* and *plutôt*

However, when considered together in an extended diachrony, it becomes clear, as Hansen (2020a) shows, that the two clines are staggered in time: not only is the rise of the temporal content-level use of *plutôt* more recent than that of the analogous use of *ainz*, but the same is true at both of the pragmaticalization Stages 2 and 3, such that at all three stages, *plutôt* gradually comes in as a new marker competing with the already established *ainz* for the same functional territory, until *ainz* finally disappears from the language altogether in the course of the 17th century. Putting together the two clines in Figure 11.1, we thus get a cycle-like structure like that in Figure 11.2.



Figure 11.2 The *ainz* > *plutôt* cycle in French

11.3.2.3.2 Semasiological micro-cycles of pragmaticalization

The evolution of the French adverbs/PMs *ja/déjà* from the Medieval to the Contemporary language constitutes a semasiological micro-cycle, schematized in [Table 11.8](#), in which two formally similar expressions with similar source meanings successively undergo very similar forms of pragmaticalization.

Table 11.8 The *ja/déjà* semasiological micro-cycle in French

Stage 1 (35)	Stage 2 (36)	Stage 3 (37)	Stage 4 (38)
Content level	Context level	Content level	Context level
Micro-syntax	Micro-/macro-syntax	Micro-syntax	Macro-syntax

As shown by [Hansen \(2014\)](#), Old French inherited from Latin the temporal/aspectual marker *ja* ('now/already' < Latin *iam*) exemplified in (35) below, which very quickly pragmaticalized with a frequently used assertive meaning ('in truth/certainly').

As illustrated in (36), assertive *ja* frequently occurs in initial position in its host utterance, which is an indicator of a movement towards macro-syntax. However, one also finds examples of *ja* that appear to be mainly assertive in nature in utterance-medial position. The status of the assertive marker as parenthetical is therefore uncertain, hence the indication 'micro-/macro-syntax' at Stage 2 of [Table 11.8](#).

Possibly because the two uses were in some instances difficult to tell apart reliably, *ja* when used with its content-level temporal-aspectual meaning came to be reinforced, already in the course of the Medieval period, by the preposition *dès* ('as of'), a combination that was eventually univerbated into the present-day form *déjà* (cf. (37)). The older form *ja* did not survive the Middle Ages. In Modern French, however, *déjà* has developed a range of pragmaticalized uses. A number of these—such as that seen in (38), whose behaviour is uncontroversially macro-syntactic—share the assertive nature of the pragmaticalized use of *ja*.

They are not, however, completely identical to it, inasmuch as *déjà* in (38) additionally marks its host utterance as the first of at least two arguments for the same conclusion.

- (35) *Sire, melement est, li rois Richars est arrivez a Baione atout granz gens, et sachiez qu'il vous a ja fait grant damage.* (1260)
 'Sire, there's trouble, King Richard has arrived in Bayonne with a large army, and you should know that he has by now/already done you great damage.'
- (36) *Sire cumpain, faites le vos de gred ? Ja est ço Rollant, ki tant vos soelt amer!* (c. 1060)
 'My noble friend, do you do it on purpose? In truth, I am Roland, who has always loved you!'
- (37) *Luc dormait déjà quand je suis rentré(e).*
 'Luc was already asleep when I came home.'
- (38) *Je pense que Sylvie est de loin la meilleure candidate: déjà, son CV est excellent et puis, elle présente extrêmement bien.*
 'I think Sylvie is by far the best candidate; not only is her CV definitely excellent, but she presents herself extremely well.'

Table 11.8 thus shows a back-and-forth cyclic movement at the levels of both meaning and grammar, similar to what we saw in connection with the evolution of *ainz* and *plutôt* in Section 11.3.2.3.1. In micro-cycles of pragmaticalization, the two levels remain in sync at all times, in contrast to both grammatico-pragmaticalization and pragmaticalization-to-lexicalization spirals. In both types of micro-cycles, we find renewal of an older form by a more recent one, but what sets the semasiological cycles apart is the fact that, in this configuration, we see an expression partly renewing itself, inasmuch as the older and the newer form are etymologically closely related. However, given the functional similarity between the content meanings at Stages 1 and 3 and between the context meanings at Stages 2 and 4, semasiological cycles are by definition also onomasiological cycles (cf. Section 11.3.2.3.1 above). For that reason, semasiological micro-cycles will be (plausibly quite considerably) rarer across languages than their purely onomasiological counterparts, although the extent to which this is so is an empirical question.

On the other hand, semasiological micro-cycles bear some resemblance to pragmaticalization-to-lexicalization spirals in virtue of the fact that, as shown

in this section, items involved in such a cycle will first gain, then lose, and then subsequently regain one or more properties that move them from the content level to the context level of meaning and from micro-syntax into macro-syntax.

11.3.2.4 Feature spirals

The final subtype of pragmaticalization to be considered is what I call ‘feature spirals’. The examples adduced below are taken from the work of Scivoletto (2020, 2022b), who uses the term ‘semasiological cyclicity’ for the phenomenon. While feature spirals are—as we will see—in some ways reminiscent of the semasiological micro-cycles just discussed in Section 11.3.2.3.2, the examples adduced do not, however, fit the definition of cycles proposed in this chapter. In feature spirals, the overall direction of pragmaticalization is linear. What makes these spirals similar to cycles, however, is a back-and-forth movement at a more granular level of either meaning or grammar.

The first example below, which concerns the evolution of the Sicilian marker *mentri* (Scivoletto 2020), illustrates the gain and subsequent loss of a particular context-level feature of meaning, namely that of marking a contrast. *Mentri*’s initial acquisition of this feature is central to its initial pragmaticalization, but the marker subsequently loses that feature in the process of polypragmaticalization, see Table 11.9.

Table 11.9 Sicilian *mentri*: a semantic-feature spiral

Stage 1 (39)	Stage 2 (40)	Stage 3 (41)	Stage 4 (42)
Micro-syntax	Micro-/Macro-syntax	Macro-syntax	
Content level	Context level		
[– contrast]	[+ contrast]		[– contrast]

- (39) *Mentri li cavaleri foru in la bactagla, Estasiu si era remasu en la terra*
(15th century—from Scivoletto 2020: 246)

‘While the knights were in battle, Estasiu remained on the ground’

- (40) *Ma pri taluni poi non c’è fortuna / E supra centu non ni ‘nsera una. / [...]*
/ Mentri cu nasci sutta bona luna / pisca ‘ntra un vasu e pigghia
pisci-luna. (19th century—from Scivoletto 2020: 248)

‘But for someone there is no luck / And out of one hundred he gets none. / [...] / Whereas one who is born under a good moon / picks from a vase and catches moonfish.’

- (41) *A. ri università:: no ora finì—B. ora finišti—A. accuminzà::—B. mentri giovane!* (21st century—from Scivoletto 2020: 242)
 A. ‘at university:: well now I’m done’—B. ‘now you’re done’—A. ‘I’ve started::’—B. ‘you’re young, though!’
- (42) *Mentri comè, quannu vieni a Mmuòrica, sempre tutto bello?* (21st century—from Scivoletto 2020: 244)
 ‘By the way, how’s it going, when you come to Modica is everything always fine?’

In its source meaning, exemplified in (39) above, *mentri* is a content-level and micro-syntactic subordinating conjunction marking temporal simultaneity between two SoAs. At Stage 2, illustrated by (40), *mentri* moves to the context level of meaning, where it is used to oppose two SoAs, which the speaker presents as standing in a contrast to one another. At this stage, *mentri* still introduces what looks formally like a subordinate clause, but as the punctuation in (40) suggests, it may have been perceived by many language users as standing in a comparatively more paratactic relation to its (putative) main clause than was the case at Stage 1.

Mentri retains the new contrastive feature in Stage 3, but the type of contrast expressed is now a counter-expectational one, as seen in (41). Although the pragmaticalization of *mentri* was originally driven by the acquisition of the contrastive feature, and despite the fact that this feature is lost again in the most recent Stage 4, the marker remains pragmaticalized, now as a marker of topic shift (cf. (42)).⁷

Where the polypragmaticalization of *mentri* involves the acquisition and subsequent loss of a specific semantic feature, the second example of feature spirals involves the initial widening and subsequent reduction of the scope of a marker. The marker in question is the present-day Sicilian mirative/correction marker *bi*, which has evolved from the imperative verb form *vidi* (‘look!’), via the attention-getter *vi*, as seen in Table 11.10 and (43)–(46) below.

- (43) *Vidi, Peri, Bernardu Migiaru meu cumpagnuni avi factu unu cuntrattu* (1341—from Scivoletto 2022b)

‘Look, Peri, my partner Bernardu Migiaru has drawn up a contract’

⁷ A reviewer asks whether topic shift is not a form of contrast. While it is not particularly surprising to find a marker of contrast developing into a marker of topic shift (and *mentri* is not an isolated instance of this within Italo-Romance; cf. Russo in prep.), I nevertheless agree with Scivoletto’s (2020: 252) analysis of the use of *mentri* in (42) as clearly different in nature from the two contrastive uses in (40)–(41). A new discourse topic introduced as a digression neither necessarily stands in direct opposition to the topic that preceded it nor is necessarily counter-expectational in the sense that the hearer might have expected that topic *not* to be raised. (In Fraser’s (2009: 897) terms, topic shift involves discourse contrast, not semantic contrast.)

Table 11.10 Sicilian *vidi* > *vì* > *bì*: a feature spiral

Stage 1 (43)	Stage 2 (44)	Stage 3 (45)	Stage 4 (46)
Content level	Context-level		
Micro-syntax	Macro-syntax		
Scope below proposition	Scope above proposition		Scope below proposition

- (44) *Vì, chi cui vinci primu perdi poi* (1645—from [Scivoletto 2022b](#))

‘See, whoever wins at first will lose in the end’

- (45) *E i nuòssci mali, Signuri, quali su? Sunn’assai? ci rissiru cianciennu i viddani. Bih! bih! bih!... cci rsipusi u Signuri, i vuòssci mali su’ quant’i pùlici nò misi r’austu* (1884—from [Scivoletto 2022b](#))

‘And our evils, Lord, what are they? Are they many? the peasants cried to him. Oh! oh! oh! answered the Lord, your evils are as many as the fleas in the month of August’

- (46) *A mia u psicologu, bì u psicologu, u dietologu mi risi...* (21st century—from [Scivoletto 2022b](#))

‘My psychologist, oh, not my psychologist, my dietician told me...’

The source item *vidi*, seen in (43), expresses a content-level injunction for the addressee to attend to some visually perceptible phenomenon in the extralinguistic environment. In this example, the imperative constitutes a complete sentence, paratactically combined with a second, syntactically separate, sentence *Bernardu M... cuntractu*. Thus, it functions micro-syntactically and could straightforwardly have taken a complement (‘Look at that, Peri!’). Such a complement is implicit in (43), and it constitutes the semantic scope of the imperative. In other words, *vidi* scopes below the proposition.

At Stage 2 (cf. (44)), *vidi* is phonetically reduced to *vì*, and is instead used to direct mental attention to the contents of the host utterance, which is a context-level function. Here, it can no longer take a complement, and rather than constituting a sentence, it has the parenthetical status of a DM, scoping the following utterance. This remains the case at Stage 3, where the marker has undergone further phonetic change to its initial consonant and now expresses mirativity; that is, a type of speaker stance. At Stage 4, however, its scope is reduced to comprising a subpart of a proposition, namely the subpart that is being singled out for correction. Its grammatical status is still parenthetical and macro-syntactic, though.

Feature spirals resemble semasiological micro-cycles and pragmaticalization-to-lexicalization spirals to the extent that in all these forms of pragmaticalization, we find a linguistic expression initially gaining and subsequently shedding a particular feature that was centrally involved in allowing its initial pragmaticalization. A salient difference between, on the one hand, feature spirals and pragmaticalization-to-lexicalization spirals and, on the other, semasiological micro-cycles is the fact that in the former two subtypes of pragmaticalization, the expression remains pragmaticalized after losing the feature in question. This is not the case in a semasiological micro-cycle, where the expression is de-pragmaticalized (and thus returns to the content level of meaning) as a result of losing the feature in question (i.e. in the case of French *ja/déjà*, the assertive feature found in (36)), only to be re-pragmaticalized later when it regains that feature (cf. (38)).

11.4 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the rise of PMs is not a simple and unitary process but one that can take different forms, and that particular forms of pragmaticalization may correspond to the creation of different subtypes of PMs. It has been shown, with the example of semasiological micro-cycles (Section 11.3.2.3.2), that pragmaticalization is not even necessarily a unidirectional process, although—as in the case of grammaticalization—unidirectionality can be assumed to be a very strong tendency.

I have argued that it is descriptively useful to maintain a distinction between different macropaths of change, saliently including a distinction between pragmaticalization and grammaticalization, as a conflation of the two impairs our ability to give a systematic account of intuitively different directions of travel in language change. Conflating the macropaths would also prevent us from accounting for possible interactions between them; yet, as proposed in Section 11.3.2.1, such interaction might help explain, for instance, the special nature of MPs as opposed to DMs.⁸

I have proposed that the three macropaths that have been of central interest to this chapter can be modelled by distinguishing between two levels of meaning and two levels of grammar, and I have defined pragmaticalization as a change in the level of meaning at which a given expression function, more specifically

⁸ Possible interaction between grammaticalization and pragmaticalization might also help explain cases such as that of the French preverbal negative marker *ne*, which in at least some contemporary varieties (Fonseca-Greber 2007) appears to be in the process of becoming specialized for pragmatic purposes following the grammaticalization of postverbal *pas*, and where the pragmatic purposes in question are moreover reminiscent of those that originally allowed *pas* to grammaticalize as a negator (cf. Hansen 2009).

a movement from the content level to the context level. A change in the level of grammar at which the expression functions, on the other hand, is not a necessary concomitant of pragmaticalization, as shown by the example of grammatico-pragmaticalization. Thus, in the framework proposed here, the fact that we find, in the rise of PMs, a frequent empirical correlation between the movement from content-level to context-level meaning and movement from the lexicon/micro-syntax into macro-syntax becomes an *explanandum*, not something that is or should be part of the definition of PMs.

The interactions observed both between macropaths of change and between levels of meaning and levels of grammar, as well as the fact that cyclic developments, in particular, are found in both grammaticalization and pragmaticalization (and plausibly also in lexicalization, although—for reasons of space—that has not been discussed here), support the notion that meaning and grammar are closely intertwined, such that complex and dynamic relations obtain between different levels of linguistic description.

Acknowledgements

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A typology of cyclicity

Waves and spirals, constructions and features

Giulio Scivoletto

12.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the concept of cyclicity in language change, proposing a definition based on a typology of cycles. This typology results from intersecting two fundamental distinctions: waves or spirals of change, namely recurrence of a cline or back-and-forth trajectories on a cline; and constructionalization or constructional shifts—that is, change involving the rise of new constructions or affecting specific features.

Since seminal works on cycles of pragmaticalization (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a; Hansen 2014), the concept of cyclicity has been researched—beyond the level of morphosyntax (van Gelderen 2011, 2023; Bouzouita et al. 2019)—with particular reference to pragmatic aspects of language (Hansen 2018a, 2020b). This study attempts to systematize differences in approaching cyclicity mainly at the level of semantic-pragmatic change, first discussing foundational issues about cycles (Section 12.2), adding new empirical data (Section 12.3), and finally taking up the framework of Diachronic Construction Grammar (Section 12.4).

In Section 12.2, elaborating on previous theoretical reflection (Scivoletto 2020), the first distinction of types of cyclicity is discussed. Recurrence of a given evolution or cline—illustrated by the metaphor of waves—is contrasted with back-and-forth change alongside a particular dimension—depicted by the metaphor of spirals. While most studies have focused on recurrence, the case of Sicilian *mentri* (Scivoletto 2020) is a good example of back-and-forth change in a semasiological perspective,¹ with reference to its functional development into the discourse-pragmatic level.

¹ The distinction between semasiological and onomasiological cycles is defined by Hansen (2018a: 56, 64) as follows: ‘if one and the same form, or several etymologically closely related forms, repeatedly develop(s) similar context-level functions from a similar point of departure at the content level ... we are dealing with semasiological cyclicity’, whereas onomasiological cyclicity is found ‘if we observe that a similar context-level meaning/function or set of meanings/functions is renewed several times by etymologically unrelated forms with similar content-level source meanings’.

In [Section 12.3](#), expanding the empirical data under examination, spiral-like cyclicity is discussed further. While the cycle of *mentri* has been examined as change revolving around a semantic dimension (contrast), the case of *bì* involves scope change, a feature that intersects meaning and form. The Sicilian form undergoes a back-and-forth trajectory along a generally recognized tendency in the evolution of discourse markers (DMs); that is, scope increase: as *bì* evolves at the discourse-pragmatic level, its scope expands at first, but it gets reduced in the latest stage of the diachronic thread. This empirical finding highlights the role of particular dimensions, or features, in detecting cycles.

As cycles can involve either the creation of new constructions or shifts in single features, a new distinction emerges if we take up the framework of Diachronic Construction Grammar: cyclicity can be observed in terms of constructionalization or constructional shifts (cf. discussion in [Section 12.4.1](#)). Intersecting this latter distinction with the former, a typology of four conceptions of cycles results. Cyclicity can be seen either as recurrence or back-and-forth change on the one hand, and as constructionalization or constructional shift on the other. In [Section 12.4](#), this typology is discussed, drawing on the recent research on cyclicity.

12.2 Types of cyclicity: spirals and waves

This study argues that cycles stand for continuous linguistic change involving a back-and-forth evolution with respect to a particular dimension, and they can be metaphorically intended as spirals.² Although cyclicity was first envisioned in modern linguistics by means of this metaphor, conceptions have developed in a different perspective, which involves the re-instantiation of a given change, and which is depicted by the metaphor of waves. This section briefly traces this history and distinction, and it eventually recalls the case of *mentri* ([Scivoletto 2020](#)) that shows an instance of back-and-forth, spiral-like, cyclicity.

12.2.1 Cycles, spirals, waves

While the concept of linguistic cycles can be traced back to scholars such as Condillac, Bopp, and Humboldt (van [Gelderen 2011](#): 3), the foundations of present-day research are the works by von der Gabelentz, Meillet, and Jespersen. [Von der Gabelentz \(2015 \[1891\]: 268–271\)](#) first proposed the image of the spiral to represent the change whereby languages alternate—that is, cyclic change—synthetic and analytical patterns. Later, the spiral is referred to by [Meillet \(1921](#)

² This discussion of cycles in terms of spirals and waves, already formulated in [Scivoletto \(2020\)](#), is consistent with similar reflections offered by [Pons and Llopis \(2020\)](#).

[1912]: 140–141), in his pioneering understanding of the evolution of lexical items into grammatical forms: linguistic forms evolve in a cyclic fashion, in that once a lexical item has undergone a particular diachronic path, new items may tread the same path once again. A renowned example is the so-called Jespersen Cycle (Jespersen 1917) affecting negation and first studied in the history of French: the preverbal negation inherited from Latin (preverbal *ne*) weakens and is reinforced by an additional word or minimizer (bipartite *ne pas*), which later becomes the only negative device functioning in postverbal position (postverbal *pas*), and might eventually re-instantiate the process (preverbal *pas*) over again (cf. Hansen 2009). These three foundational works take into consideration different linguistic structures, and they correspond to the types distinguished by Heine et al. (1991: 245): isolated instances of grammaticalization (Meillet), subparts of a language (Jespersen), or entire languages and language types (von der Gabelentz).

A fundamental difference among these approaches concerns continuous versus discontinuous change. In anasynthetic spirals (the alternation of synthetic and analytical patterns in the history of languages; cf. Szmrecsanyi 2016; Haspel-math 2018) and negative cycles, language change is observed as a continuous phenomenon, affecting language type and negation respectively. For instance, in the Jespersen Cycle, French negation evolves uninterruptedly from preverbal *ne* to postverbal *pas*. One can see a spiral with respect to a particular dimension (i.e. single or double negation): in the overall evolution, the language is moving—metaphorically speaking—from single to double negation and back to (new) single negation. The latest stage resembles the oldest, but they are not identical (preverbal *ne* vs. postverbal *pas*): the image of this change is a spiral rather than a full circle. In this perspective, a cycle might be detected by studying the evolution of one single structure or one single language.

A different conception, dating back to von der Gabelentz³ and Meillet,⁴ considers discontinuous change: put simplistically, once an item has gone through a given kind of grammatical evolution, other forms will follow. This view of cycles entails recurrence, in that more than one diachronic thread must be taken into account at the same time. The discontinuous approach was elaborated in terms of ‘cyclic waves’ by Givón (1979b: 209, original emphasis). Crosslinguistically, discourse structures undergo syntacticization, and they erode into morphological markers, later into morphophonemic items, and eventually fade out altogether: discourse > syntax > morphology > morphophonemics > zero. Such a tendency is

³ Cf. von der Gabelentz (2015 [1891]: 253; my translation): ‘What was once new and rare becomes common, and so it loses its strength, fades It’s like in public service: one gets hired, promoted, put on half-pay, and eventually retires altogether; and outside the gates, a crowd of applicants is waiting.’

⁴ Cf. Meillet (1921 [1912]: 140–141, my translation): ‘Languages follow a kind of spiral development; they add accessory words to achieve an intense expression; these words weaken, degrade, and fall at the level of grammatical tools; new words or different words are added for expressivity; the weakening begins again, and so on, endlessly.’

at the heart of research on grammaticalization, which shows the following cline: content item > grammatical word > clitic > inflectional affix > zero (cf. Hopper and Traugott 2003: 7; Narrog and Heine 2021: 130). Considering the case of French negation, the discontinuous approach would account for the development of the specific items that constitute the structure (*ne* and *pas*). In other words, specific negative particles can undergo syntacticization and erosion. Yet, the overall construction can be understood in the continuous approach, in terms of a cycle from single to double marking (and possibly to single, once again). What might be labelled wave-cyclicity corresponds also to the perspective of van Gelderen (2011, 2023), who has extensively researched linguistic cycles: cyclicity always involves phonological weakening and loss.⁵ Well-established lines of research—both in functional (cf. Givón 2018b) and formal (van Gelderen 2011, 2023) approaches—share the core idea of discontinuous change: cycles are detected across separate diachronic threads; that is, changes that recur in more than one construction or one language.

12.2.2 Wave-cyclicity

Since the first studies (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a; Hansen 2014; cf. also the *avant la lettre* study by Cuenca 1992–1993), cycles of pragmaticalization have been conceptualized as discontinuous change; that is, recurrence of a given trajectory among different linguistic items.

According to Hansen (2014: 164), these cycles are found ‘when the content-level source item of a context-level (i.e. pragmatic) marker is replaced, then the new item is likely eventually to become the source of context-level functions similar to those of the item it replaced’. This is the case with Latin *iam*, Medieval French *ja*, and Modern French *déjà*: the three parallel forms evolve from temporal/aspectual ones, and they develop ‘discourse-oriented senses which, although not identical, are in several cases reminiscent of one another’ (Hansen 2014: 164). Recurrence is also key in the definition by Molinelli (2014: 269), according to whom cycles of pragmaticalization are ‘frequent, productive, and iterative processes through which lexical elements, which have acquired a pragmatic function, are gradually replaced by different source lexemes, which progressively take over the functions originally performed by the replaced forms’. Such a process is exemplified by the evolution of politeness markers in Latin and Italian. In the two languages, independently, a pair of verbs meaning ‘I ask’—Latin *QUAERO* (later pragmaticalized as *QUAESO*) and Italian *chiedo*—and ‘I pray’—*ROGO* and *prego*—display the same

⁵ Cf. van Gelderen (2016a: 3): ‘cycles involve the disappearance of a particular word and its renewal by another’. In revising her definition, the core notion of ‘phonological loss’ is maintained, either as a driving force in itself or as a later outcome of earlier pragmatic strengthening (van Gelderen 2023: 6).

semantic-pragmatic trajectory towards politeness marking. The change affecting Italian parallels the one involving Latin, but with some difference: the most pragmatized item is the one originating from ‘I pray’ in Italian, (*prego*) and the one originating from ‘I ask’ in Latin (*QUAESO*).

What is peculiar about cycles of pragmaticalization—in contrast to morphosyntactic ones—is that recurrence yields an outcome that resembles its predecessor rather than being identical to it.⁶ In this sense, authors have returned to the metaphor of the spiral: ‘the evolutions in question are in several cases ultimately more like spirals than cycles in the strict sense’, as ‘semantic/pragmatic renewal results in patterns of usage which are similar, but not identical, to those of the items that are being renewed’ (Hansen 2018a: 70; cf. also Ghezzi and Molinelli 2020: 231).

The use of this metaphor and the one proposed in this study (and already Scivioletto 2020) differ significantly. Describing cycles of pragmaticalization, the spiral is opposed to the circle: change does not recur in an identical manner, so the cycle is not a proper circle, but a spiral (cf. Hansen 2018b: 143). To my understanding, the spiral here only serves to symbolize the imperfect nature of recurrence. On a more general level, these studies still represent cases of wave-cyclicity: quasi-identical changes recur along a given diachronic trajectory, just like waves follow and resemble one other along with the tide:

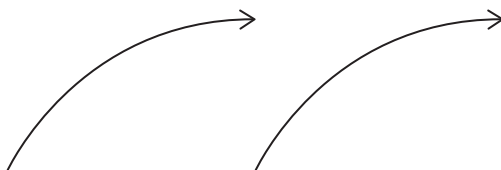


Figure 12.1 Cycles as waves

In Figure 12.1, the arrows represent a cline that is repeated; that is, a diachronic thread that re-instantiates and resembles its antecedent. After a first thread has unrolled (first arrow), a parallel one follows (second arrow). Two distinct arrows indicate that wave-cyclicity is a discontinuous change.

In a different sense, the image of spirals can be used not in contrast to full circles but rather to waves. As Figure 12.2 shows, a spiral represents a back-and-forth trajectory with reference to a particular dimension.

⁶ This difference might be due to different levels of abstraction usually assumed. On the one hand, morphosyntactic cycles are observed according to very general formal features of a construction, mainly its syntactic function (e.g. demonstrative > copula > zero, in *Copula Cycles*, or demonstrative > article, in *Determiner Cycles*; cf. van Gelderen 2023). On the other hand, cycles of pragmaticalization have been studied delving into semantic-pragmatic change, fine-tuning specific trajectories. The distinction might be captured by the notions of macropaths and micropaths (Hansen, this volume).

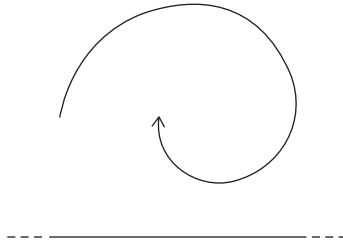


Figure 12.2 Cycles as spirals.

In Figure 12.2, the arrow represents a single line of continuous change. Its movement can be seen with respect to a bottom line, representing a particular dimension of analysis, which has two endpoints. A spiral is traced when change is metaphorically mapped onto this dimension: it proceeds in one direction (from one endpoint to the other) but eventually turns back, going in the opposite direction.

These metaphors are used to portray two distinct ways to look at change. Cyclicity is depicted either by waves, if it is conceived as (discontinuous) recurrence of a cline, or by spirals, if it is regarded as (continuous) back-and-forth development along a cline. The latter case has been exemplified by Sicilian *mentri* (Scivoletto 2020), as summarized in Section 12.2.3.

12.2.3 Spiral-cyclicity

In contrast to wave-cyclicity, the evolution of *mentri* as a DM in Sicilian is a case of spiral-cyclicity. Summing up the analysis in Scivoletto (2020, 2022a), the original conjunction stems from Latin *DŪM INTĒRIM*, with a temporal meaning of simultaneity (Stage I: ‘while, in the meantime’), which gives rise to an adversative meaning (Stage II: ‘whereas’). This development from time to contrast is brought about by a context-induced reinterpretation: when the two elements linked by the conjunction correspond to an antonymic state-of-affairs, the linking item is reanalysed as marking precisely this opposition (cf. the theoretical account provided by Mauri and Giacalone Ramat 2012: 218–229). This evolution is very common crosslinguistically, as it is attested in Romance co-etymological forms (It. *mentre*, Sp. *mientras*, and so on) and Eng. *while*, and it is not limited to Indo-European languages (cf. Heine and Kuteva 2002: 291–293).

Peculiar to Sicilian and in contrast to its Romance cognates, the word for ‘while’ evolves its adversative function further, namely from opposition to counterexpectation. *Mentri* can mark not only an opposition between two propositions, but it extends to mark the contrast between one’s own utterance and some expectation that derives from the context of discourse (Stage III: ‘however, though’). Consider,

for instance, a conversation happening in a café (Scivoletto 2022a: 69): a man finds out that another man has already graduated (that is, earlier than he expects) and utters *mentri giovane* ('young, though!').

Finally, counterexpectation is exploited as a rhetorical strategy, which is used by speakers to mark their conversational moves as salient in the ongoing discourse (Traugott 1999). Rhetorically exploited, no actual contrast is expressed. Discourse marking uses emerge instead, both as a textual function of cohesion (Stage IVa: 'by the way') and as an interpersonal function of positive appraisal (Stage IVb: 'not bad!'), and the form co-occurs (or merges) with the emphatic particle *a* (*a mentri* or *amentri*). In the first case, *mentri* marks cohesion with preceding discourse, either shifting or expanding a topic. For example, in a family discussion (Scivoletto 2022a: 72) an elderly woman says that she owes some money to her daughter for buying some diapers; the daughter expands the topic, from the price to the quality of the object, and so she asks *mentri comu fuoru* ('by the way, how were they?'). In the second case, by means of *amentri* a speaker can mark a positive evaluation about the context of discourse or situation. In a post on social media (Scivoletto 2022a: 76), a man writes *a mentriiii* (without univertation) to comment on a picture of a friend who is having a good time in a pub, in order to express appreciation ('not bad!').

In its overall diachrony, *mentri* has first developed a contrast value, which then expands and finally fades out in the discourse marking uses. If we consider the adversative function, *mentri* has evolved back and forth: it has first developed and then lost it. With respect to this function as a dimension for change, a continuous spiral-like trajectory emerges (Figure 12.3).

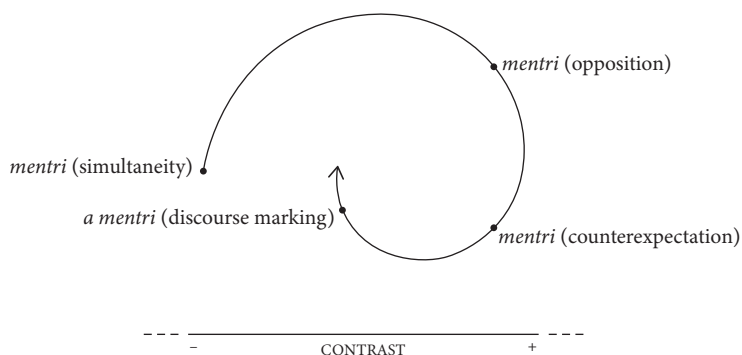


Figure 12.3 Spiral-cyclicity in the evolution of Sicilian *mentri*

As Figure 12.3 shows, spiral-cyclicity needs a particular dimension, according to which a back-and-forth movement can be identified. In the case of *mentri*, this dimension is the development of the contrast function. In this sense, this evolution has been first presented in terms of semasiological cyclicity (Scivoletto

2020): a cycle is detected by focusing on meaning change, and not on the form itself. In other words, in the overall evolution of the lexical item (a form-function association, whose elements both undergo change), cyclicity involves mainly its functional development.

Beyond the semasiological/onomasiological distinction, the evolution of DMs in Sicilian offers another piece of evidence for detecting back-and-forth movement in semantic-pragmatic change. The following section (Section 12.3) presents the diachrony of *bì*, as a case of spiral-cyclicity. These empirical findings allow for elaborating on the issue of dimensions and features in the analysis of cycles (Section 12.4).

12.3 Cyclicity in scope change: the evolution of *bì* as a discourse marker in Sicilian

This section takes into account the evolution of *bì* as a DM.⁷ This is shown to be a case for of back-and-forth movement which is not limited to meaning change. The specific dimension along which a cycle is detected is scope change. Sicilian *bì* shows that scope expansion takes place at first, as happens in the evolution of DMs, but it is followed by scope reduction eventually. In this sense, with reference to the dimension of scope, the DM develops a cyclic path.

As to methodology, this study is based on a broader study of DMs in Sicilian (Scivoletto 2022a). Present-day data come from recordings of spontaneous informal speech (around 30 hours of talk, involving around 70 speakers), plus a sample of computer-mediated communication collected on social media. Historical data are drawn from *ARTESIA* (a corpus of 1.3 million tokens from 746 texts), for Old Sicilian (14th–16th centuries), and from an original collection of texts—including dictionaries, ancient grammars, collections of songs and folk tales, poetry, and drama (cf. Scivoletto 2022a: 183–185)—for Modern Sicilian (17th–20th centuries).

12.3.1 Present-day uses of *bì*

In a synchronic perspective, today *bì* displays two kinds of function—both interpersonal and textual, as is typical of DMs: on the one hand, it expresses the surprise of the speaker in reaction to a given context, namely as a mirative marker (cf. Aikhenvald 2012); on the other hand, it marks self-correction; that is, it signals

⁷ The DM was first discussed with reference to the marking of mirativity in Sicilian (Scivoletto 2025), and its evolution is examined in the framework of intersubjectification (Scivoletto forthcoming).

a *lapsus linguae* on the part of the speaker that requires rectification (cf. [Gülich and Kotschi 1995](#)).

While the former function is attested by lexicography, the latter has been detected only in recordings of spontaneous informal speech. In the main lexicographical source for Sicilian, *Vocabolario Siciliano* (VS: s.v. *bbi!*), the form is treated as an interjection, and it is defined as an ‘exclamation of surprise or wonder’. In fact, surprise is often exploited to perform appreciation (‘wonder’) on a pragmatic level (e.g. Eng. *wow*):

(1)⁸ CHATTING ABOUT CHRISTMAS

A: c'è il bambino piccolo, P., che ha fatto i disegni per tutt+ per tutti gli zii
 c=è il bambin-o piccol-o, P., che
 LOC=be.PRS.3G ART.DEF.M.SG child-M.SG little-M.SG PN REL
 ha fatto i disegn-i per tutt-
 AUX.PRS.3SG do.PTCP ART.DEF.M.PL drawing-PL for all
 per tutt-i gli zi-i
 for all-M.PL ART.DEF.M.PL uncle-M.PL
 ‘there is the little kid, P., who made some drawings for all the aunts and uncles’

B: *bì::*
 DM
 ‘Oooh!’

C: simpatico P!
 simpatic-o P.
 nice-M.SG PN
 ‘P. is so nice!’

In (1), speaker A is talking about a child who made some drawings for Christmas gifts. Speakers B and C both react surprised, to express their appreciation: B by means of a dedicated mirative DM, and C with an explicit remark.⁹ When surprise and appraisal combine, *bì* displays a number of formal variants—*pì*, *mbì*, *mbè*—often attested on social media:

⁸ Speech is transcribed with a mixed orthographic-conversational system (cf. Scivoleto 2022a: 186–187). Relevant to the examples in this chapter, note that: italic and regular fonts indicate the two codes in bilingual discourse, respectively Sicilian and Italian; parts in Italian are rendered following standard orthography. The symbol ‘˙’ indicates lengthening, ‘=’ latching, ‘/’ pauses, ‘+’ self-interruption, and ‘|’ a change in discourse planning, and punctuation renders basic intonations. Computer-mediated communication data are reported exactly as they were originally typed. In historical data, ‘/’ stands for the end of a line.

⁹ In the utterance by speaker C, surprise is implied through the mirative strategy of focus fronting ([Cruschina and Bianchi 2021](#)).

(2) COMMENTS ON THREE FACEBOOK POSTS

- a. Pi ppi ppi ppi ppìì (Scritto non rende. L'audio richiedilo su Whatsapp)
 pì, pì, pì (Scritt-o non rende. L=audio
 DM written-M.SG NEG render.PRS.3SG ART.DEF.M.SG=audio
 richiedi-lo su WhatsApp)
 ask.IMP.2SG-OBJ.M.SG on WhatsApp
 'Oh! (Typed text doesn't work. Ask for the voice message on WhatsApp)'
- b. Mbiiiii chi priuuuu
 mbì chi pri-u
 DM COMP joy-M.SG
 'Oh, what a joy!'
- c. mbe mbe mbe!!!!a mancàutu tu
 mbè, mbè, mbè a mancàutu tu
 DM EMPH miss.PST.IPFV.2SG you
 'Oh, all we needed was you!'

In (2) three independent comments are compared, which react to pictures posted on Facebook by three different young women. In all three, variants of *bì* convey surprise to express appreciation ('wow') about the beauty of the friend in the picture. Formally, the DM shows graphic rendering of phonetic change: devoicing of the bilabial stop (*pì*, 2a) and its dissimilation (*mbì*, 2b), which can be accompanied by lowering of the vowel (*mbè*, 2c).

However, surprise is not necessarily associated with a positive evaluation. The data allow us to distinguish a proper mirative meaning (surprise) from pragmatic evaluation (positive appraisal):

(3) FAMILY CHATTING

A: (sneezes three times)

B: *bì*!

DM

'oh!'

C: *ti stai arrufriddannu. ma nunn-ô viri ch'è picciùttu!* (laughs)

ti=stai arrufriddannu. ma nunn=ô
 2SG.OBL=AUX.PRS.2SG get_a_cold.PROG but NEG-OBJ.M.SG
 viri ch=è picciùtt-u
 see.PRS.2SG COMP=be.PRS.3SG youth-M.SG

'you are getting a cold. Well, don't you see, he's young!'

In (3), after speaker A sneezes, speaker B utters *bì* to express her surprise, and speaker C makes a sarcastic comment. Speaker B is just surprised about speaker

A (her brother) getting a cold: the DM performs a mirative meaning, but no positive pragmatic evaluation.

In addition to mirativity, *bì* serves the textual function of correction:

(4) FAMILY CHATTING

A: *a mia u psicolugu, bì u psicolugu, u dietolugu mi rissi [...]*
a mia u psicolugu, bì u
 to OBL.1SG ART.DEF.M.SG psychologist, DM ART.DEF.M.SG
psicolugu, u dietolugu mi=rissi
 psychologist, ART.DEF.M.SG dietician OBL.1SG=tell.PST.3SG
 ‘my psychologist, oh not my psychologist, my dietician told me’

Regardless of the wider context, in (4) *bì* serves to correct a mistake in talk. The speaker invalidates something she has just said, by resuming and marking it (*bì u psicolugu*, ‘oh not my psychologist’), and so allowing for rectification (*u dietolugu mi rissi...*, ‘my dietician told me...’).

In a diachronic perspective, correction is an outcome of mirative uses, as the reconstruction of the evolution of *bì* in the next subsection shows.

12.3.2 The discourse-pragmatic evolution of *bì*

Sicilian *bì* stems from the imperative of ‘to see’ (2SG), *vidi*, and develops discourse-pragmatic uses already in Old Sicilian:

(5) *DIALAGU DE SANCTU GREGORIU* (1315; in *ARTESIA*)

Vidi, Petru, de quanta sanctitati fu kyllu episcupu, ky standu et sedendu pocti astutarj lu focu per sua sanctitati, sencza ayutu humanu

Vidi, Petru, de quant-a sanctitat-i fu
 see.IMP PN of how_much-F.SG holiness-F.SG be.PST.3SG
 kyllu episcup-u, ky standu et sedendu pocti
 DEM-M.SG bishop-M.SG COMP stay.IPFV and sit.IPFV can.PST.3SG
 astutarj l-u foc-u per su-a sanctitat-i,
 put_out.INF ART.DEF-M.SG fire-M.SG with POSS.3-F.SG holiness-F.SG
 sencza ayut-u human-u
 without help-M.SG human-M.SG

‘See, Petru, of how much holiness was that bishop, who by just staying and sitting could put out the fire by means of his sanctity’

Example (5) shows that, already at the beginning of the 14th century, *vidi* does not convey visual perception, and it is rather used to draw the attention of the reader,

in a rhetoric and persuasive manner. The function of attention-getting (cf. [Fagard 2010](#)) conventionalizes during the 16th century:

- (6) POEM BY T. BONFARE (D.1609; IN [GALEANO 1645](#): 321)

Vì, chi cui vinci primu perdi poi

Vì,	chi	cui	vinci	primu	perdi	poi
DM,	COMP	who	win.PRS.3SG	first	lose.PRS.3SG	then

‘See, that who wins at first will lose in the end’

In (6), *vidi* is reduced to the first syllable, and the resulting monosyllable, *vì*, carries a graphic accent. On the functional side, a reading of *vì* as a perception verb is impossible: ‘who wins at first will lose in the end’ is something to consider or to acknowledge rather than to see. The discourse marker is in the process of developing a mirative meaning, as a bridging context shows:

- (7) POEM BY V. GANGI (D.1816, IN [DI MARIA 1978](#): 62)

Dd’ucchiuzzi ca lucenu / Vih vih chi cosa rara!

Dd=ucchi-uzz-i	ca	lucenu
DEM=eyes-DIM-PL	REL	shine.PRS.3PL

Vih, vih	chi	cos-a	rar-a
DM	COMP	thing-F.SG	rare-F.SG

‘Those little eyes that shine / Oh, oh, how rare a thing!’

In (7), the form appears with a final grapheme, <h>, that is used in Italo-Romance varieties for monosyllabic secondary interjections (e.g. present-day Italian *beh*, from *bene* ‘well’, and *mah*, from *ma* ‘but’). Also typical of interjections or DMs, *vih* in (7) shows repetition. By the 18th century, a DM has emerged (*vih*), formally distinguished from its lexical source, the imperative of ‘to see’ (*vidi*). Functionally, a crucial semantic-pragmatic change is occurring: *vih* not only draws the attention of the listener/reader but also expresses the attitude of the speaker/writer. The attitude is precisely a mix of surprise and positive evaluation. In this sense, in (7) a bridging context is shown between attention-getting and mirativity. One century later, the mirative meaning appears, detached from pragmatic appraisal:

- (8) FOLK TALE ([GUASTELLA 1882](#): 50)

Saluti vi ‘uòggiu, gnu massaru... Bih, comu siti sculanti! assittàtivi ô luci

Saluti	vi	‘uòggiu,	gn-u	massar-u...	Bih,	comu
health	OBL.2PL	want.PRS.1SG	Mr.-M	farmer-M.SG	DM	how

siti	sculanti!	assittàtivi	ô	luci
be.PRS.2PL	drenched	sit.IMP.2PL	by.DEF.M.SG	fire

‘Greetings to you, Mr. farmer. Oh, how drenched you are! Sit by the fire’

In (8), a woman welcomes a man: she notices that he is soaking wet, so she expresses her surprise (*Bih, comu siti sculanti!* ‘Oh, how drenched you are!’) and offers him a seat by the fireplace. The woman is not appreciating the fact that the man is drenched, of course: mirativity does not entail any positive evaluation. As to the form, betacism led *vih* into *bih*, just like *bì* in present-day speech.

While mirative uses are widespread in the 19th century, correction has no attestations in the historical data. Correction can be understood as a later function, not only due to negative chronological evidence but also by means of internal semantic reconstruction: it results as a specialized outcome of mirativity. Mirative *bì* functions as a change-of-state token (Heritage 1984): something unexpected has just happened, so the speaker expresses their surprise. In fact, correction can be seen as a specific use of surprise, which is performed in reaction to a change-of-state that concerns the text rather than factual events. In other words: the speaker expresses a surprised reaction with respect to a mistake that has just occurred in speech, so as to signal the mistake and to allow for self-rectification.

The overall evolution of *bì* as a DM is schematized in Table 12.1.

Table 12.1 The evolution of *bì*^a

Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Stage IV
<i>vidi</i>	<i>vi</i>	<i>vih, bih</i> (> <i>pì, mbì, mbè</i>)	[bɪ]
imperative V	> attention-getting DM	> mirative DM	> corrective DM

^a ‘V’ stands for ‘verb’ and ‘DM’ for ‘discourse marker’; in Stage III, *bì* is represented through phonetic transcription (as well as in Figure 12.4), precisely due to its absence in historical written data.

In Table 12.1, Stage III includes different formal variants of the DM: *vih* and *bih* are written realizations attested throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, whereas *pì*, *mbì*, and *mbè* are attestations from present-day use in social media. The latter are mere phonetic variants: they have a mirative meaning just like the written attestations in past centuries, so they do not constitute a proper further stage in the evolution. Besides, the phonetic changes reflected by these forms (devoicing and dissimilation of the consonant, lowering of the vowel) may well have occurred in the past: the fact that they are found in social media today does not entail that they are present-day innovations.

Finally, in order to clarify the diachronic relation between mirativity and correction, consider a case of bridging context, drawn from present-day data:

(9) FAMILY CHATTING

A: *c'era na / nu parrucchieri mi pari | bî, u fotografu*
c=era n-a n-u parrucchier-i
 LOC=be.PST.IPFV.3SG ART.INDF-F ART.INDF-M hair_dresser-M
mi=pari, bî, u fotograf-u
 OBL.1SG=seem.PRS.3SG DM ART.DEF.M.SG photographer-M.SG
 'there was a... a hair salon, I think. Oh, the photo studio!'

In (9), *bî* is not properly corrective, like in (4), because it does not mark the mistaken segment. Also, there is no formal clue to tell correction from mirativity in this example. In fact, the utterance might be read according to both values (mirativity and correction): the speaker expresses her surprise in reaction to some inaccuracy in her preceding utterance. Proper corrective uses have been identified through a formal feature, namely the scope of the DM. This is precisely the issue at stake for detecting a cycle, as discussed in the [next subsection](#).

12.3.3 Spiral-cyclicity in the scope change of *bî*

As is generally agreed,¹⁰ DMs expand their scope alongside their discourse-pragmatic evolution: 'semantic-pragmatic scope of DMs extends beyond the sentence over the situation of discourse, that is, it relates the use of a DM directly to the organization of texts, the attitudes of the speaker, and/or speaker-hearer interaction' (Heine et al. 2021: 28–29, fn. 12). Typical but not restricted to DMs, scope expansion has been pointed out by Traugott and Dasher (2002) in their general framework of semantic change based on the conventionalization of invited inferences.

In the case of *bî*, scope change occurs according to the general tendency. Nevertheless, in the last stage of its evolution, the DM develops a corrective function that restricts its scope: after its expansion, its reduction is attested next, so that a back-and-forth movement can be conceived along the tendency of scope increase. [Table 12.2](#) shows the different segments over which *bî* carries its scope, with references to examples seen above.

In Stage I (example (5)), *vidi* carries its scope over a clause ('of how much holiness was that bishop'), which is part of the wider proposition ('of how much holiness was that bishop, who by just staying and sitting could extinguish the fire by means of his sanctity'). Thus, it has scope within the proposition. In Stage II, *vi* has scope over the entire proposition ('who wins at first will lose at last'). In other

¹⁰ In different terms and approaches, cf. at least Traugott and Dasher (2002: 40, 281), Degand and Evers-Vermuel (2015: 76–77), Salameh et al. (2018: 122), and Heine et al. (2021: 28–29).

Table 12.2 Scope of *bì* in its discourse-pragmatic evolution

Stage	Ex.	Element [in brackets] <i>bì</i> carries its scope over	Function	Type of scope ^a
I	(5)	Vidi, Petru, [de quanta sanctitai fu kyllu episcupu]	imperative	SCOPE WITHIN PROPOSITION
II	(6)	Vì, chi [cui vinci primu perdi poi]	attention-getting	SCOPE OVER PROPOSITION
III	(8)	[(a man enters, soaking wet)] Bih, comu siti sculanti!	mirative	SCOPE OVER DISCOURSE
	(1)	[A: c'è il bambino piccolo, P., che ha fatto i disegni per tutt ⁺ per tutti gli zii] B: bì::		
	(2)	[picture of a friend] Mbiiiiiii chi priuuuu		
	(3)	[A: (sneezes three times)] B: bì!		
IV	(4)	a mia u psicolugu, bì [u psicolugu], u dietolugu	corrective	SCOPE WITHIN PROPOSITION

^a The terminology in Traugott and Dasher (2002) is chosen for this table and in the text because it specifies the structural units over which an item carries its scope. On the contrary, the notion of semantic-pragmatic scope in the sense of Heine et al. (2021) provides only a distinction between scope over sentence and scope over discourse. A more detailed description of the back-and-forth scope change of *bì* is possible according to the Val.Es.Co. model of discourse segmentation (cf. Salameh et al. 2018): scope increases from 'sub-acts' (Stage I) to 'acts' (Stage II) and 'interventions' (Stage III), eventually moving back to 'sub-acts'.

words, it has scope over the proposition. In Stage III, scope is extended to the discourse and its context. Already in the 19th century (8), *bih* shows scope over the situational context described in the folk tale (a man entering, soaking wet), which we can infer by reading the words by the character ('Oh, how drenched you are!'). The scope is over the situational context or the discourse as well, in present-day speech data. In (1), it involves actual discourse; that is, the whole turn by the preceding speaker in the conversation ('there is the little kid, P., who made some drawings for all the aunts and uncles'). In (2), mirativity is exploited to comment on a Facebook post (part of the preceding of co-text) with the picture of a friend. In (3), the DM is used for reacting to an action of the interlocutor, who is sneezing repeatedly.

So far, scope expansion has taken place, consistently with the general tendency affecting DMs. In Stage IV, scope is eventually reduced, instead. In corrective uses, *bì* marks a specific part of the proposition (the one that needs correction; in example (4), 'my psychologist'): it has scope within the proposition. In the discourse-pragmatic evolution of *bì*, scope has increased at first, and it has subsequently decreased, so that a cycle is completed.

Along the dimension of scope change, a back-and-forth movement takes place, which is a continuous development: *bì* stems from the imperative, it acquires a pragmatic function (attention-getting), and gradually evolves into a DM. In this overall trajectory, a specific dimension is found, on which we can see a back-and-forth change (SCOPE WITHIN PROPOSITION > SCOPE OVER PROPOSITION > SCOPE OVER DISCOURSE > SCOPE WITHIN PROPOSITION).

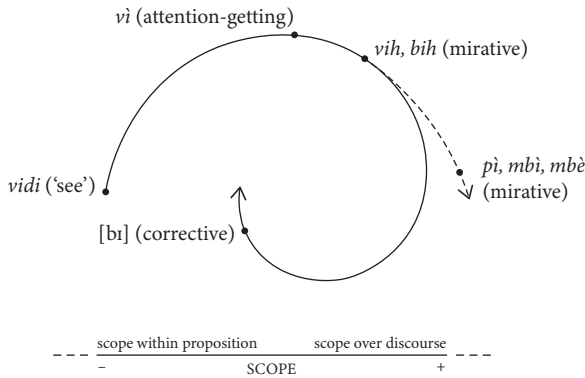


Figure 12.4 Spiral-cyclicity in the evolution of Sicilian *bi*.

In [Figure 12.4](#), the dotted line represents the further phonetic reduction that affects the mirative marker, resulting in the variants *pi*, *mbi*, and *mbè*. These forms do not constitute a stage in the diachronic thread under investigation, as schematized in [Table 12.1](#) ([Section 12.3.2](#)). Rather, the evolution of *bi* includes a split at Stage III, causing divergence between the original item developing the textual function of correction, and new formal variants limited to mirative marking.

Trajectories can look smooth and linear, thanks to analytic and interpretative efforts to account for the complexity of language change. In this perspective, the spiral in [Figure 12.4](#) results from considering the four stages according to a specific dimension, or feature; that is, scope. Thus, a distinction has emerged, namely between single features and whole constructions, that can serve as a second criterion to discern different notions of cyclicity.

12.4 A typology of cyclicity

At the heart of different notions of cyclicity ([Section 12.2](#)), a first distinction regards (discontinuous) recurrence and (continuous) back-and-forth change. Depicted by waves and spirals, these types of change differ in terms of what kind of trajectory they develop. The analysis of *bi* suggests a second relevant distinction

regarding what kind of items are affected by change: a cycle is detected, with respect to a single feature; that is, scope (Section 12.3.3). Thus, we can distinguish cycles of features, such as *bì*, from cycles involving the rise of new constructions, such as the evolution of politeness markers in Latin *ROGO* and Italian *prego* (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a).

Classic cycles of pragmaticalization like the latter (Section 12.2.2) and cyclicity in the evolution of Sicilian *bì* (Section 12.3.3) differ not only in terms of trajectory (waves and spirals) but also in terms of items involved: whole new constructions or single features. The distinction between constructions and features may be elaborated according to the framework of Diachronic Construction Grammar, in terms of constructionalization and constructional shift (Section 12.4.1). Thus, intersecting the first distinction (recurrence vs. back-and-forth change) and the second one (constructional shift vs. constructionalization), a typology of cyclicity is proposed (Section 12.4.2).

12.4.1 Constructions and features: constructionalization and constructional shift

Diachronic Construction Grammar is a growing field within historical linguistics (cf. Traugott and Trousdale 2013; Smirnova and Sommerer 2020; Gildea and Barðdal 2023; inter alia). Despite specific theoretical orientations and approaches, it is based on the notion of construction, which is schematized in Figure 12.5 according to Croft's (2001: 18) generally agreed-upon formulation.

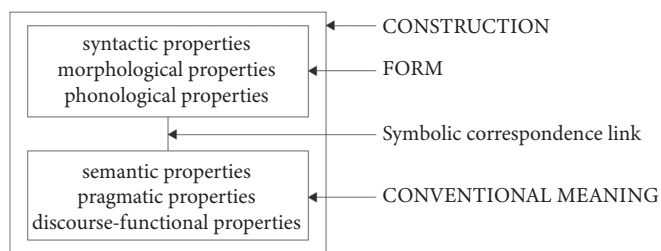


Figure 12.5 A construction and its features (from Traugott 2022: 26)

Essentially, a construction is a sign—that is, a form–meaning pair—whose symbolic link is not necessarily predictable (cf. Goldberg 2006: 5). Crucially, both form and conventional meaning represent clusters of traits, or features: phonological, morphological, and syntactic properties on the one hand; semantic, pragmatic, and discourse-functional ones on the other. Thus, a constructional approach ‘predicts that different components of a construction can be accessed

independently from others even though the construction is functionally a unit, and so it ‘provides a way of specifying how particular features of the constructions involved are modified over time’ (Traugott 2022: 31, 98). In this sense, Diachronic Construction Grammar has discussed a distinction between change involving the creation of a new construction and changes affecting one or more specific features:

Constructionalization is the establishment of a new symbolic link between form and meaning which has been replicated across a network of language users, and which involves an addition to the construction. (Traugott 2022: 49)

A constructional change is a change affecting one internal dimension of a construction. It does not involve the creation of a new node. (Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 26)

The distinction has been widely debated (cf. Börjars et al. 2015; Hilpert 2018; Smirnova and Sommerer 2020; Gildea and Barðdal 2023; inter alia). The most fundamental argument against it concerns the notion of construction in its Saussurean sense; that is, as a form–meaning pair: when change involves a feature, be it its meaning or its form, the whole construction is affected (cf. Smirnova and Sommerer 2020: 12–13). Precisely to avoid this implication, Traugott and Trousdale (Traugott, p.c.) have started using the label constructional ‘shift’ instead of ‘change’. Moreover, it is not straightforward to identify a threshold between changes happening within a construction and the rise of a new one, and ‘this threshold may turn out to be a line in the sand that is impossible to draw with certainty’ (Hilpert 2018: 27). Nonetheless, the distinction has not been discarded but rather downplayed (Gildea and Barðdal 2023), and more often redefined. Seen as a relative and analytical tool rather than an objective or categorical fact (Hilpert 2018; Flach 2020), the distinction is maintained in revised terms, namely node changes versus connectivity changes (Hilpert 2018) or node-internal changes versus node-creation (Smirnova and Sommerer 2020).

The cycles discussed in this chapter can be examined according to this opposition, namely constructionalization versus constructional shifts. In fact, opposing waves and spirals does not suffice to understand the different ways in which cycles are observed. Consider the difference in the two instances of spiral-cyclicity in Sicilian: the back-and-forth change of *mentri* is observed with constructionalization—that is, with the rise of the DM (*a*) *mentri*—whereas the spiral-like scope change of *bi* takes place after constructionalization—that is, it concerns internal shifts of the very same DM. Thus, if we intersect this distinction with that between recurrence (wave-cyclicity) and back-and-forth change (spiral-cyclicity), a typology of cyclicity can be suggested.

12.4.2 Types of cyclicity

A typology of cycles is schematized in Table 12.3, and the four types are illustrated with examples from the studies on cyclicity.

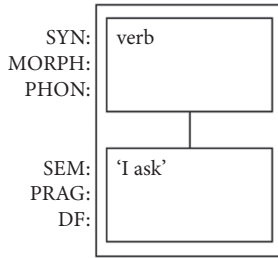
Table 12.3 A typology for cyclicity (with relevant examples)

TYPES OF CYCLICITY	Recurrence (waves)	Back-and-forth change (spirals)
Constructionalization (rise of new constructions)	Type 1: • <i>ROGO</i> and <i>prego</i> (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a) • <i>macho</i> and <i>tío</i> (Pons and Llopis 2020) • <i>ainz</i> and <i>plutôt</i> (Hansen 2020a)	Type 3: • <i>dizque</i> (Company 2018) • <i>mentri</i> (Scivoletto 2020; Section 12.2.3) • <i>ja/déjà</i> (Hansen 2014, this volume)
Constructional shift (change in specific features)	Type 2: • <i>però</i> and <i>per (ai)xò</i> (Cuenca 1992–1993)	Type 4: • <i>bì</i> (Section 12.3.3) • Fr. neg. coord. conjunction (Hansen 2021a)

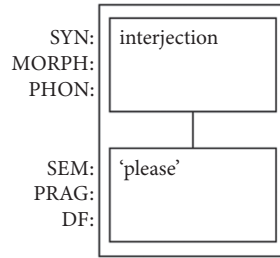
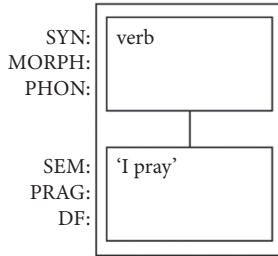
Type 1 represents wave-cyclicity of whole constructions; that is, a (discontinuous) recurrence of a constructionalization process. An example is the rise of politeness markers across Latin and Italian (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a), schematized in Figure 12.6.¹¹

The rise of politeness markers in Latin and Italian is a case of wave-cyclicity because it is about recurrence of a cline. In terms of trajectory, Figure 12.6 includes two different lines of development, corresponding to the two waves of the cycle, which need only two endpoints; that is, the original stage and the final one. In terms of items, recurrence involves the creation of a new construction. Verbs with a lexical meaning (‘I ask/I pray’) evolve as DMs with a politeness function (‘please’): Latin *ROGO* and Italian *prego* emerge as new constructions. In fact, in Figure 12.6, change is relevant in both of the two internal boxes in the construction, form, and conventional meaning: the part-of-speech changes from verb to interjection, and the original semantics evolves into a politeness marking. This kind of evolution—from verb to DM—represents the rise of a new construction (cf. Gildea

¹¹ The following figures (12.6–12.9) are drawn from Traugott (2022), and they are based on the scheme of a construction given in Figure 12.5. The large boxes indicate whole constructions and their overall evolution (symbolized by ‘>’). Inside each construction, the two small boxes represent the properties of form (syntactic, morphological, phonological) and of conventional meaning (semantic, pragmatic, discourse-functional). Following Traugott (2022), only the properties that are relevant to the diachronic analysis are explicitly mentioned in the small boxes.

ROGO:

>

**prego:**

>

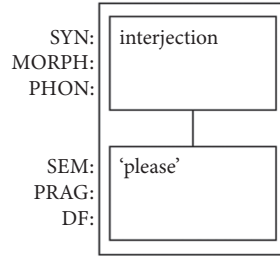


Figure 12.6 Recurrence (waves) of constructionalization: Latin *ROGO* and Italian *prego* (Type 1)

and Barðdal 2023: 23). As a DM, *prego* is completely emancipated from its verbal origin, as it has lost its original syntactic (agreement, argument structure) and semantic (meaning ‘to pray’) features, as shown by Ghezzi and Molinelli (2014a). This is also reflected by lexicography: a special entry is added in the vocabulary, labelled as an interjection, and dated back to 1868 (cf. NDM).

The same template in Figure 12.6 may be applied to other instances of Type 1, such as the cycles of *macho* and *tío* (Pons and Llopis 2020) and *ainz* and *plutôt* (Hansen 2020a): two distinct lines of constructionalization, including change in both form and meaning. In Spanish, allocutive constructions emerge in two recurrent waves. First the noun *macho* meaning ‘male’, and later the noun *tío* meaning ‘uncle’, develop syntactically as interjections, and their original semantics gives rise to the allocutive function ‘mate’. Also French *ainz* (‘before’ > ‘rather’) and *plutôt* (‘before/sooner’ > ‘rather’) represent waves of constructionalization. In the overall evolution from content-level to context-level uses, change affects the word class (preposition and adverb becoming connectives) as well as meaning (from temporal anteriority to corrective function).

Type 2 represents wave-cyclicity as well, but it involves single features: it is about (discontinuous) recurrence of constructional shifts. It is schematized in Figure 12.7 by means of the case of *però* and *per (ai)xò* in Catalan (Cuenca 1992–1993).

As in Figure 12.6, Type 2 includes two distinct lines of development, which constitute the waves of the cycle. In this case, recurrence is not about the creation

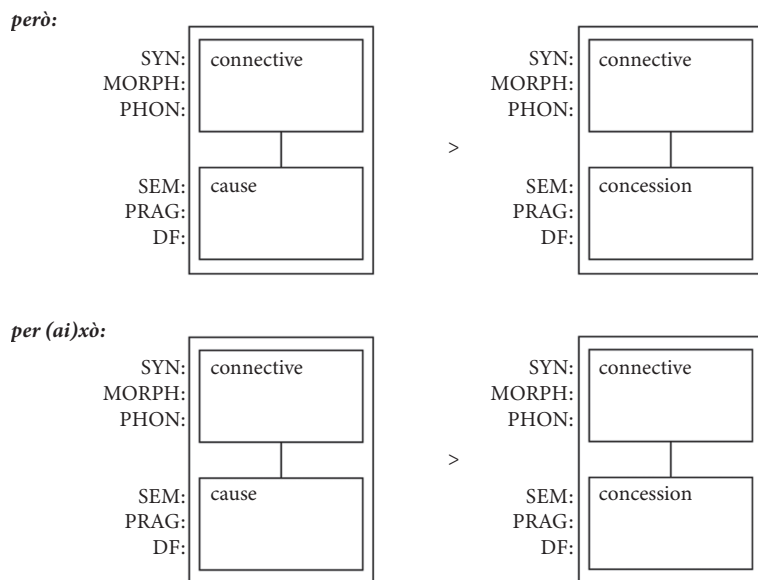


Figure 12.7 Recurrence (waves) of constructional shifts: Catalan *per(à)* and *per (ai)xò* (Type 2).

of a new construction but it concerns rather its internal structure. First, stemming from a Latin prepositional phrase *PER HOC* with causal meaning ('for this'), *per(à)* has developed a concessive meaning (cf. also the evolution of *per(à)* in Italian; Mauri and Giacalone Ramat 2012: 198–207). Then, a parallel second wave follows: in present-day speech, the Catalan causal connective *per (ai)xò* ('for this') starts being used with concessive value as well.¹² In the case of Catalan studied by Cuenca (1992–1993), cyclicity concerns constructional shifts: the semantic properties change from cause to concession, restructuring both connectives, *per(à)* at first and *per (ai)xò* afterwards.

Type 3 represents spiral-cyclicity of new constructions; that is, (continuous) back-and-forth movement in constructionalization. To exemplify this type, the evolution of *dizque* can be referred to (cf. Company 2018: 373–378). In Spanish, the full ditransitive verb *decir* 'to say' has been used with an evidential meaning since the 15th century (10a). In Mexican Spanish, since the 16th century, the verbal phrase *dizque* has coalesced as an evidential DM, literally '(it/he/she) says that' (10b). Finally, in present-day speech, the form has turned into an adjective, meaning 'supposed, not true' (10c):

¹² Catalan *per (ai)xò* is parallel to Latin *PER HOC*, but it is not its direct descendent (as is the case with *per(à)*). For this reason, no back-and-forth change is observed but precisely the recurrence of a particular trajectory of semantic change.

- (10) a. *En Seçilia se dice que hay una sal que, echándola en el fuego, se desface é torna en agua.*
 ‘In Sicily it is said that there is a kind of salt that becomes water, putting it into fire’
- b. *Que Francisco se sacó la lotería, dizque...*
 ‘That Francisco won the lottery, supposedly...’
- c. *Muchas pseudoorganizaciones dizque altruistas [...]*
 ‘Many supposedly altruistic pseudo-organizations [...]

The evolution *dice que* > *dizque* includes change in both form and meaning, and it involves the creation of new constructions—from a verb phrase to an evidential DM, and eventually to an adjective—as schematized in Figure 12.8.

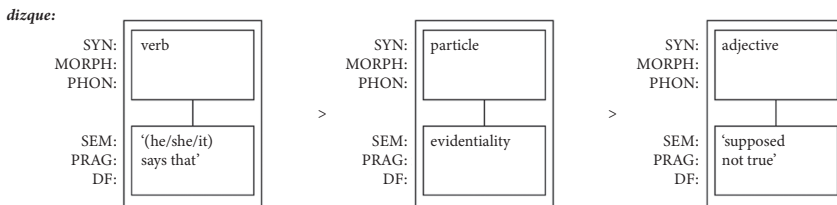


Figure 12.8 Back-and-forth (spirals) constructionalization: Spanish *dizque* (Type 3)

Company (2018) discusses the case of *dizque* as an instance of ‘round trip directionality’ between what she terms sentence grammar and periphery grammar. The evolution starts from a full lexical verb, which is part of sentence grammar. Then, the rise of the evidential DM follows a directionality from sentence to periphery grammar (given that DMs are items of the latter).¹³ This trajectory is an ‘up and down in the cline’ of grammaticalization of DMs (Company 2018: 361). Along the direction of change from sentence grammar to periphery grammar, we can see how a spiral is traced. Such a description matches the notion of back-and-forth change discussed here (Section 12.2.3).

A case of back-and-forth constructionalization is also the evolution of *mentri* (Section 12.2.2). The spiral is traced between Stage III and IV, when the contrast function that has been gained eventually gets lost (– contrast > + contrast > – contrast). This back-and-forth change is accomplished when, in its last stage, the connective *mentri* has given rise to a DM, (*a*) *mentri*: the latter has an interpersonal function, it tends to be merged with the emphatic particle *a*, and it can

¹³ Company (2018: 362) states that the distinction between sentence and periphery grammar is essentially parallel to that between sentence and discourse grammar by Heine and colleagues (cf. Heine et al. 2021).

occur in isolation. So, the spiral along the dimension of contrast takes place, and a new construction is created. The emergence of the new construction is reflected once again by lexicographical sources: the univerbated form *amentri* is included in [Consolino \(1988: s.v.\)](#), defined as an adverbial locution and translated into Italian ‘certamente, è così come tu dici’ (‘of course, it is just like you say’).

The particles *ja/déjà* are another instance of back-and-forth constructionalization. If the particles are not seen as distinct etymologically related forms ([Hansen 2014, 2018a](#); cf. [Section 12.2.2](#)), but rather as an overall trajectory, we observe a ‘micro-cycle of pragmatization’ (Hansen, this volume). Stemming from Latin *IAM*, Old French *ja* pragmatized (from content-level to context-level uses, from micro-syntax to macro-syntax). The constructionalization of *déjà* (< *dès* ‘as of’ + *ja*) yields a de-pragmatized particle (content-level uses, micro-syntax). Then, this new item re-pragmatizes, in a way that resembles its predecessor. In other words, the trajectory of *ja/déjà* traces a spiral of constructionalization: as the new construction (*déjà*) emerges (out of the older one, *ja*, which disappears eventually), we can see a case of back-and-forth pragmatization.

In contrast to Types 1 and 2, Type 3 represents one line of development and three stages. In fact, while recurrence is a discontinuous change relating two ‘waves’ between two endpoints, back-and-forth trajectories are a kind of continuous change, affecting a single item. Also, in order for a spiral to be traced, three stages are required,¹⁴ so that a direction of change takes place at first (Stage I > Stage II) and is eventually reversed (Stage II > Stage III). The same applies to the last type of cyclicity ([Figure 12.9](#)).

Type 4 represents spiral-cyclicity of single features, i.e. (continuous) back-and-forth movement in constructional shifts. Taking Sicilian *bì* ([Section 12.3.3](#)) as an example, a single trajectory is schematized in [Figure 12.9](#).

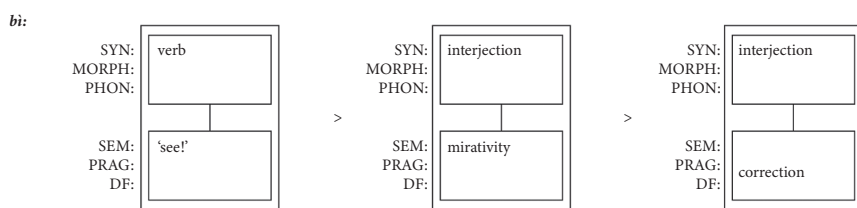


Figure 12.9 Back-and-forth (spirals) constructional shift: Sicilian *bì* (Type 4)

In its evolution, *bì* undergoes spiral-cyclicity with respect to a feature; that is, along the directional dimension of scope change (scope increase > scope decrease; [Section 12.3.3](#)). The change does not involve the creation of a new construction: the very same item—in traditional syntactic terms, an interjection—is used in new contexts. Constructionalization has occurred early in the evolution, when mirative

¹⁴ Cf. the distinction between two-step and three-step cycles by [Pons and Llopis \(2020\)](#).

bì has originated from the imperative verb. The spiral is traced later, and it regards the DM, which develops the corrective function,¹⁵ reversing the direction of scope change. The back-and-forth movement is a case of post-constructionalization constructional change (Traugott 2022: 51). A process of constructionalization has first taken place, leading from the imperative of ‘to see’ to the rise of the mirative DM. The DM has split from its lexical source, losing the syntactic features of a verb (agreement, argument structure). Lexicography reflects this evolution, adding a special entry for *bì* (cf. *VS*), which has diverged from the verb ‘to see’, like Italian *prego* from the verb ‘to pray’. The back-and-forth cycle concerns scope change, and it occurs later, when the very same DM develops the corrective function.

Type 4 is found also at the level of morphosyntax; that is, in the evolution the negative coordinating conjunction (‘neither’/‘nor’) from Latin to Modern French (Hansen 2021a). The construction undergoes change at the level of semantics: in Latin, the morphosyntactic structure is used in strong negative polarity contexts; by the age of Medieval and Renaissance French, it has extended to weak negative polarity ones; eventually, Modern French restricts it to strong negative polarity contexts once again. So, ‘what is etymologically one and the same linguistic item extends its functional profile, only to subsequently retract to something that in many ways resembles its starting point’ (Hansen 2021a: 251).¹⁶ A single line of continuous spiral-cyclicity has taken place, with reference to the dimension of strong/weak negative polarity contexts, restructuring the features of the construction rather than originating a brand new one.

12.5 Conclusion

This study has presented new empirical data on the evolution of DMs in Sicilian, and it has discussed the concept of cyclicity.¹⁷ By proposing a typology, it has tried to contribute to the understanding of the different senses and uses of this notion. These typology results from two general distinctions, which intersect and yield four types of cycles. The first distinction (already dealt with in Scivoletto 2020; Section 12.2) concerns the kind of trajectory: recurrence of a

¹⁵ In Figure 12.9, correction is treated as a discourse-pragmatic rather than semantic property (cf. Ariel 2010). In fact, correction is implied in the coded meaning (namely, mirativity) of *bì*. Although the meaning is not fully coded, corrective uses still count as a further and final stage in the evolution of the DM (cf. Scivoletto 2025).

¹⁶ The term ‘retracts’ points to a possible comparison between spiral-like cyclicity, proposed in this chapter, and the notion of ‘retraction’ by Haspelmath (2004).

¹⁷ The conception of cycles proposed in this study does not deal with the psychological reality of linguistic facts in the perspective of cognitive and usage-based approaches. Rather, cyclicity is discussed as an analytical tool, a theoretical notion to help linguists account for language change. I thank Elizabeth Traugott for drawing my attention to this general concern.

cline, represented by the metaphor of waves, is opposed to back-and-forth change on a cline, represented by a spiral traced alongside a specific dimension in a diachronic path.

The diachronic analysis of Sicilian *bi* (Section 12.3) has shown a cycle in terms of scope change, suggesting the importance of focusing on a specific feature within the overall evolution of linguistic item. Thus, a second distinction has emerged, concerning the kind of items involved. Within the perspective of Diachronic Construction Grammar (Section 12.4.1), a cycle can entail either constructionalization (i.e. the creation of new constructions) or constructional shifts (i.e. restructuring of a construction with respect to one or more of its features). Intersecting these two distinctions, four types of cycles have been analysed (Section 12.4.2): recurrence (waves) of constructionalization, recurrence (waves) of constructional shift, back-and-forth (spirals) constructionalization, and back-and-forth (spirals) constructional shift. This typology may contribute to explaining the different kinds of change that have been described under the notion of cyclicity (cf. also Hansen 2018a, this volume; Pons and Llopis 2020).

Among these types, wave-cyclicity (as recurrence of a given diachronic path; Section 12.2.2) would partly overlap with the general and well-established concept of grammaticalization and pragmaticalization clines.¹⁸ In fact, the key value of clines is precisely their recurrence, which makes them a valuable heuristic tool crosslinguistically. Still, the notion and instances of wave-cyclicity describe recurrence of clines not only across languages, but also within a single one. Also, wave-cycles in semantic-pragmatic change are treated at a greater level of granularity than morphosyntactic cycles (cf. footnote 7). As to spiral-cyclicity, this seems a rather specific notion of what a cycle may be. Back-and-forth changes with respect to a particular dimension represent a peculiar kind of trajectory, which can enhance our understanding of directionality in language change.¹⁹ Especially in this sense, cyclicity can be a very useful descriptive concept in the study of language change.

Corpora

ARTESIA = Mario Pagano, Salvatore Arcidiacono, and Ferdinando Raffaele (eds.). *Corpus Artesia. Archivio testuale del siciliano antico*. Università di Catania: Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani. <http://artesia.ovi.cnr.it> (last update: 31.12.2022).

¹⁸ To disentangle wave-cycles from clines, the role of renewal should be addressed in more detail (Traugott 2018a; cf. Hopper and Traugott 2003: 122–124; Reinöhl and Himmelmann 2017).

¹⁹ The traditional hypothesis of unidirectionality (cf. Hopper and Traugott 2003: 130–138; Haspel-math 2004) has been questioned, with particular reference to the evolution of DMs (cf. Company 2018; Pons 2018), to the framework of Diachronic Construction Grammar (Gildea and Barðdal 2023), and to non-linear forms of evolution between grammaticalization and pragmaticalization (Hansen, this volume).

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen and Richard Waltireit for leading the AHRC Research Network ‘The Role of Pragmatics in Cyclic Language Change’ and for commenting on the first draft of this chapter. I’m grateful to Maj-Britt and to Elizabeth Traugott for all our musings on cyclicity. All errors and shortcomings are my responsibility, of course.

Clines and cycles of meaning change

Ruti Bardenstein

13.1 Introduction

Speakers of any language, at any stage of history, communicate effectively, but that communication is not simple. Time and again speakers need to creatively resolve difficulties in conveying their intended message by constantly searching for ways to negotiate the speaker–hearer interaction (see, most notably, [Grice 1975](#)). Grice proposed four maxims as governing cooperative discourse (under the ‘cooperative principle’), rendering it meaningful: Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. Abiding by these maxims keeps the discourse properly conducted, or as [Grice \(1975: 45\)](#) phrased it: Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

However, claims [Grice \(1975\)](#), there could be flouting of one or more of these maxims because the speaker wishes to generate a conversational implicature based on the discourse participants’ prior knowledge and shared language use, and therefore speakers who deliberately flout the maxims intend for their listener to understand their implicature. In addition, claims [Grice \(1975\)](#), speakers might use conventional implicatures, which are part of the lexical item’s conventional (albeit non-truth-conditional) meaning, rather than derived from principles of language use (as in the case of words such as *even*). In both conventional and conversational implicatures, a discursive purpose is served.

But why do people create implicatures to begin with? What exactly are their purposes? [Grice \(2004\)](#) and [Goffman \(2008\)](#), among many others, provide different theories for the reasons behind the generation of implicatures. Most elaboratively, [Goffman \(2008: 17\)](#) argues that by employing exaggeration (quantity), deceptions (quality), circumlocutions (manner), or irrelevance (relevance) in face-to-face talk, speakers may want to be polite, to preserve their self-esteem or dignity, to avoid uncomfortable situations, to point to a more elaborate explanation (proximity), and/or to evoke humour. In other words, when providing seemingly insufficient, dishonest, irrelevant, unpleasant, and unclear information, speakers flout the maxims for specific communicative and/or self-interest reasons. In both cases of implicatures, speakers convey implicit meaning to fulfil some discursive

need. Most important, conversational implicatures can also conventionalize in time as proposed by Grice (1975: 58), who argues that it is possible ‘for what starts life as a conversational implicature to become conventional’. This claim is exemplified in (a–c), following Traugott and König (1991):

- (a) I’m 15, I haven’t done horseback riding **since** I was 10 and I wanted to get back into it. [www.quora.com]
- (b) Ever **since** the new manager took over, the office has been more organized and efficient. [[https://mochidictionary.com/english/ever-since-\(%E2%80%A6\)](https://mochidictionary.com/english/ever-since-(%E2%80%A6))]
- (c) **Since** I got an F, I will probably be taking the class over. [<https://home.miracosta.edu/jturbeville/online%20student%20comments.htm>]

While (a) is purely temporal, and bears no causality, in (b) causation is implied (i.e. the office is much more organized and efficient than it was before **because of** the new manager), and lastly, in (c) causation is foregrounded or even ‘semantic’ and no longer implied (i.e. it has ‘conventionalized’). You cannot say, for example, ‘**ever** since I got an F, I will probably be taking the class over’. The temporal sequence is backgrounded as it is not the communicative point of the utterance.

However, implicatures are not the only driver of meaning change, and they are also not the only inference-based form of meaning change. While speakers indeed seek to be polite, save face, be explanatory, and evoke humour, and in general, aim to serve their own as well as the addressee’s interests, all these reasons do not exhaustively motivate or represent the mechanisms behind language change; conventionalization of implicatures (even if still often considered implicatory and not fully semantic) is not the only mechanism of change taking place once motivation for change has ‘kicked in’. In addition, while cyclicity has been investigated for years now and focused on the level of morphosyntax (e.g. Jespersen 1917; Meillet 1921), the investigation of cyclicity at the level of semantic/pragmatic change and the role of pragmatics and/or cognition in cyclic meaning change is a very recent one. In general, few have investigated cyclic mechanisms of change based on their pragmatic and cognitive motivations (e.g. Hansen 2018a/b, 2020c) and even fewer have discussed their crosslinguistic or ‘universal’ nature by mapping and uniting the different (diachronic) clines and cycles of change that languages share. Thoroughly investigating those processes is the goal of this chapter.

This investigation will include mechanisms of grammaticalization (the result of which is a piece of grammar; see Heine 2018)¹ and constructionalization processes, following Traugott and Trousdale (2013, 2014) and Goldberg (1995).

¹ The term ‘grammaticalization’ as used here includes cases of ‘pragmatization’, (see Hansen 2014, Bardenstein 2019) i.e. the creation of a new discourse item.

Such constructionalization processes focus on linguistic strings that exhibit form–function correlations, often a fully non-compositional one (see also [Bardenstein 2020](#) who discusses constructionalization as occurring on a wide spectrum, ranging from compositional to non-compositional).

I draw a distinction between linguistic clines and linguistic cycles. Cycles are created based on consecutive linguistic clines but not vice versa: clines are not based on cycles but rather potentially lead to their creation. Linguistic clines (following [Halliday 2004](#)) frame specific instances within the crosslinguistic or ‘universal’ systems that lie behind them. Clines may therefore form larger cycles. In other words, a crosslinguistic (or universally) attested change can be considered a cline and some (but not all) clines lead to cycles of meaning change. All in all, this chapter aims to define linguistic clines and cycles of meaning change; it maps their motivations and outlines their mechanisms of evolution, with supporting evidence from both linguistic and extra-linguistic (diachronic) source.²

13.2 Why and how does meaning change happen?

13.2.1 Motivations for meaning change

After examining Gricean implicatures, we must remember that change is not always ‘externally’ activated by speakers via the conventionalization of implicatures. It might also be activated ‘internally’, by both speakers and hearers, based on the intrinsic cognitive nature of language use itself.³ I shall map five ‘external’ and ‘internal’ motivations and mechanisms of meaning change, both inference-based and non-inference-based:

- (a) **Inference-based external motivation:** Fulfilling speakers’ discursive needs (one or more of five; see [Bardenstein 2022a, 2022b](#)) by recruiting and mobilizing existing forms and/or functions. For example, speakers’ need to

² This chapter does not include an elaborate analysis of **conceptual cycles**. For example, the ‘forward’ form-based cyclic change of a word X to a compound XY and optionally back to X: in its initial form, as in the case of: *a maid* ‘an unmarried (young) woman’ < *a house maid* ‘a young girl that helps with the house chores’ < *a maid* ‘someone who helps with the house chores’ (no longer young woman necessarily), see: [www.etymonline.com]. I note that such cycles too stem from the proposed motivations of change and are driven by the proposed mechanism in this chapter. I leave this for future research.

³ In addition to the above motivations for change, **influencers** might also be involved in semantic change due to the extent of their **exposure** to a community of people. While language change always involves a community of speakers, linguistic change can come about or can be accelerated by ‘influencers’ and does not necessarily involve repetition or high frequency (see also [Hansen 2021a](#)). The term ‘influencers’ refers to either an individual, a small group of people, or even a popular TV show or any authoritative body or other form of media or social media influence. Influencers might bring about change based on the above-mentioned motivations due to the extent of their influence and exposure to a community of people. See, for example, the case of Hebrew *bilti* ‘not’ ([Bardenstein 2023](#)), whose independent privative use (similarly to English *anti*) was not created due to repetition or high frequency but rather due to hearers’ extensive exposure to a specific TV show’s use of the independent expression, as it is one of the most popular TV shows in Israel.

express their stance has led to the recruitment and mobilization of question constructions for that purpose, which in turn has led to their constructionalization and grammaticalization as exclamationatives (see [Bardenstein 2022a, 2022b](#)). This motivation and mechanism can become recurrently cyclic.

- (b) **Inference-based internal motivation:** Gradual foregrounding of certain intrinsic linguistic meanings facilitated by bridging contexts ([Evans and Wilkins 2000](#)) evoked by both speakers and hearers. For example, English *will* which originally meant ‘wish/want’ necessarily and intrinsically expresses future realization. That ‘futurism’, in turn, was later foregrounded and ‘semanticized’: *will* marks future actions as part of the construction *will* + *v1* (see [Traugott and Heine 1991](#)). This type of motivation can lead to what will be called below a ‘backward’ cycle, but it is not recurrently cyclic. It can also lead to ‘cyclicity in disguise’—the co-occurrence of earlier with newer meanings.
- (c) **Non-inference-based internal motivation:** Cognitive-linguistic conditioning (often referred to as ‘automatization’; see [Bybee 2006](#)) that is based on cognitive associative links between two linguistic items or states of affairs, similar to Pavlovian theory about psychological conditioning, here defined as ‘linguistic conditioning’—conditioning expressed in language (both speaker- and hearer-based). For example, Hebrew *herim gaba* ‘raised his eyebrow’/‘was surprised’: the physical reaction (physical state of affairs) to a surprising event (state of affairs) was automated and led to a metonymy-like outcome where *herim gaba* also means ‘was surprised/doubtful’. This type of motivation can lead to the ‘backward cycle’ but is not recurrently cyclic. In addition, it can play a role in the creation of what I will call a ‘forward cycle’, but it does not motivate it.
- (d) **Economical (shortening), internal and external motivation:** There is a general need not to spend more (linguistic) energy than is strictly necessary and therefore to prefer shortened, economical forms over more elaborate ones via various linguistic tools such as metonymy, compactization, and so on (see [Hopper and Traugott 1993/2003](#)). For example, the word *zero* is a Hebrew metonymy (part representing whole) of *Coca Cola with zero calories* and Hebrew rectification construction *bixlal lo X ela Y* has compactified into *[X] bixlal Y* (see [Bardenstein 2016](#)). This type of motivation can lead to the ‘backward cycle’. Once an item is shortened, it might change its meaning, creating the possible need to maintain the older meaning as well. In addition, this motivation can play a role in the creation of a ‘forward cycle’, creating new meanings. Lastly, this type of motivation often leads to the creation of metonymy as in the case of motivation (c), the Jespersen Cycle and simpler shortenings as the Hebrew *zero* case.
- (e) **Language contact, external inter-language motivation:** Mobilizing forms and functions from language A (mother language) to language B (and

sometimes back to language A), inter-lingually. This includes word borrowings, loan translations, or ‘grammatical reduplication’ (see, e.g. Heine and Kuteva 2015). For example, Hebrew אחלה *axla* ‘great’ which was borrowed from Palestinian Arabic beautiful/‘sweetest’ ‘most *ahla* أَحْلَى أَحْلَى or عالوقت خسارة Arabic and *xsara* ‘*alwaqt* ‘a waste of time/‘awesome’ which demonstrates a loan translation from Hebrew. This motivation is only cyclic inter-lingually (shift from language A to B and then back to A) but once borrowing and reborrowing takes place, the above motivations can ‘kick in’ intra-lingually.

This chapter focuses on different types of cycles. While previous work did discuss different types of cycles, namely ones that are generally referred to in the literature as ‘onomasiological cycles’ and ‘semasiological cycles’ (see Hansen 2018a/b, 2020b), this chapter unites them with other types of cycles such as the Jespersen Cycle (Jespersen 1917) or Jespersen Cycles (van der Auwera 2009). Thus, this chapter claims that the Jespersen Cycle(s) are not distinct linguistic phenomena but only one(s) of many cases where pragmatic-cognitive forces lead to cyclic meaning change in one way or another, with or without ellipses, with or without having to do with negation. This chapter claims that the two types of cycles (i.e. ‘backward’ and ‘forward’) highlight the relevance of other proposals made in theories of meaning change, such as grammaticalization and construction grammar. The chapter discusses crosslinguistic clines and cycles of meaning change, the motivations that drive them and the mechanisms that enable them. More specifically, the chapter claims the following:⁴

1. External motivation (a)—speaker’s discursive needs—is **recurrently cyclic** since it includes the operation of persistent and inter-related discursive motivations that create new meanings ($A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C(A)$). The $C(A)$ part

⁴ Traugott (2011) claimed that the motivations for grammaticalization are **reanalysis, analogy, and repetition**. However:

- a. **Reanalysis** only characterizes the change itself (the WHAT—what changes) that is a consequence rather than a motivation for change, as Hansen (2021a) claims: the motivation for change is the hearer’s desire to derive the most contextually relevant content from the utterance, that might lead to reanalysis.
- b. **Analogy** is but a means for linguistic change rather than a motivation. It is a cognitive-linguistic tool that is aimed to fulfil certain motivations. Motivations for change can use analogies for different discursive purposes (so as to convey their message appropriately).
- c. **Repetition**, leading to high frequency, was claimed to be different from reanalysis and analogy, as it is derived from online speaker production rather than from hearer interpretation. However, this chapter discusses cases that are also hearer-based and discusses the claim that repetition might **follow** (rather than lead to) linked states of affairs. Repetition can, therefore, be seen as but a result of the arising meaning change, and not necessarily its trigger.

means that at some point, stage C can be similar in form to stage A but is very much different in meaning. This is **the forward cycle**.

2. While independently motivating and leading to different types of meaning change, the above motivations often lead to a certain type of cyclicity that can be dubbed '**cyclicity in disguise**': it is a mere co-occurrence cyclicity that arises due to layering (Hopper 1991). Hopper claimed that 'Within a broad functional domain, new layers are continually emerging. As this happens, the older layers are not necessarily discarded, but may remain to coexist with and interact with new layers' (Hopper 1991: 22). Thus, due to layering, this type of cyclicity includes an old layer and a new layer at the same time, both expressed via **the same form** and thus appear to be cyclic while in fact, despite the double form (e.g. *going* to *go*), we are dealing here with a cline rather than a cycle—cyclicity in disguise.
3. External motivation (e)—language contact—is **cyclic inter-lingually**, via a reborrowing process. **Intra-lingually**, both languages might undergo types of change (a–d) as well.

All of the above motivations lead to meaning change and therefore counter-loosening of earlier meanings can occur. Bardenstein and Ariel (2022) claim that counter-looseners instruct the addressee to avoid (or rather, constrain) the very natural interpretative process of broadening, whereby the speaker-intended concept would have been taken as a loosened, 'more or less' interpretation of the meaning of the modified expression (Carston 2002). Once one of the motivations 'kicks in' and leads to meaning change, argumentative counter-loosening and renewal of meanings can be motivated and take place as well. Because of grammaticalization/conditioning processes or hyperbolic use of A, A changes into B, A then bleaches/is loosened and undergoes counter-loosening back into meaning A. When this happens more than once to the same item, it is a backward cycle.

Let's explore those claims and generalizations more elaboratively.

13.2.1.1 External speakers' needs: recruitment and mobilization

Bardenstein (2022a) offers an integration of numerous chapters on meaning change, proposing five motivations, five initial triggers, for 'external', speaker-activated meaning change. These motivations lead to recruitment and mobilization of certain existing form/functions to fulfil certain discursive needs leading to clines of meaning change, and those clines, in turn, later become a cycle:

- Speakers' style, linguistic innovation, creativity, and language versatility (e.g. see Haspelmath 1998).
- Stance-expression (e.g. see DuBois 2007).

- Following social and cultural norms. These include, for example, politeness (e.g. see [Brown and Levinson 1987](#)) and many other linguistic expressions of various cultural and social norms.
- Clarification, drawing attentiveness, coherence, and proper conduct of the discourse (e.g. [Traugott 2018b](#)).
- Argumentation (e.g. see [Mann and Thompson 1988](#)).

The Cline: The recruitment and mobilization of certain existing forms/function to fulfil at least one of the above discursive needs creates an implicit function (inference) that later becomes explicit/semantic (grammaticalizes).

The Forward Cycle (Spiral): Two or more inter-connected consecutive clines leading to the creation of new meanings. Since this cycle does not aim to regain earlier meanings but rather takes the language forward via cyclic use and the mechanism of certain functions, it might be better defined as a *spiral* rather than a cycle proper.

The Backward Cycle: Recurrent renewal of weakened meaning.

As a result of the grammaticalization/conditioning or hyperbolic use, the earlier meaning of the item might weaken and might be followed by speaker's need to renew it. Thus, counter-loosening of earlier meaning might take place. If it happens more than once to the same item, it is cyclic and is often expressed in duplicated forms.

*These two cycles may involve additional mid-cline-processes based on the above (b)–(d) motivations.

Cyclic Example 1: The **Forward** Rhetorical-Question Cycle (or: Stance-Expressing Cycle, the case of Hebrew *lo mi yodea malit*: 'not who knows what', Idiomatically: 'not all that'), see [Bardenstein \(2022a\)](#):

Discursive motivation: **Expressing speakers' stance.**

Cline I: Recruitment and mobilization of a question construction (*mi yodea ma* 'who knows what') to pragmatically express the speaker's strong stance (negative; see example (1)) turned semantic via a gradual constructionalization process and grammaticalized as an intensifying exclamative (semantically expressing the speaker's stance (positive); see example (2)):

- (1) *Ki mi yodea ma tov la=adam ba=xayim*
 Because who know.PRS.3SG what good for.DET=man in.DET=life
mispar yemey xayey hevl-o
 number day.PL.PROX life.PROX nonsense-POSS.3SG
ka= cel ašer mi yagid la=adam
 like=shadow that who FUT.tell.SG to.DET-man

Ma yihiye axar-av taxat ha=šemeš
 What FUT.be.3SG after-him under DET=sun
 (Ecclesiastes 6:12)

Literally: For who knows, what is good for a man in life, the number of his days of nothingness are like a shadow that who shall say to a man what will be after him under the sun?

Interpretation: For who knows what is good for a person in life, during the few and meaningless days they pass through like a shadow? Who can tell them what will happen under the sun after they are gone?

(2) *Hayiti muxan latet mi yodea ma kedey*
 I.was willing give.INF who know.3SG.PAST what in order to
lo lehistakel ba=parcuf-o šel ha=maxšir
 NEG look.INF in.DET=face-POSS.3SG of DET=device

Literally: I was willing to give who knows what in order to not look at the face of the device anymore.

Interpretation: I was willing to give **anything** in order to not look at that device anymore [The power of the telephone, 14.9.1962].

Cline II: Recruitment and mobilization of the intensifying exclamative question construction (*mi yodea ma*) to pragmatically express the speaker's stance—negative down-toning—turned semantic, via gradual constructionalization under the scope of explicit negation and grammaticalized as a down-toner semantically expressing speaker's stance (*lo mi yodea ma*, lit.: 'not who knows what', idiomatically: 'not all that'); see example (3):

(3) *Yael mesaperet ki yeš ba=mešk makhela*
 Yael tell.3SG.PRS.F that there.is in.Det=Kibbutz chorus
"lo mi yodea ma", ha=mofia
 NEG who know.3SG.PRS what that=perform.3SG.F
be-xagim ve=be=moadim
 in holidays and=on=special.occasions

Literally: Yael is saying that there is a chorus in the kibbutz 'not who knows what' that performs on holidays and special occasions.

Interpretation: Yael is saying that there is a chorus in the kibbutz that is 'not the best' that performs on holidays and special occasions [Davar, 21.6.1966].

In this example, the quality of the chorus (or, rather, the quality of the singing) is down-toned as to mean something like ‘a **not very good/impressive** chorus’.

Cyclicity: Recurrently expressing the speaker’s stance via a question construction that grammaticalizes—the same motivation and mechanism for both consecutively inter-connected clines (C1+C2), each creating a new meaning.

Additional Cyclicity 1: Initial negative speaker’s stance turns into positive speaker’s stance (intensifying exclamative) and then back to negative speaker’s stance (down-toning adverbial): Stance: **negative** → positive → **negative**.

Additional Cyclicity 2: Initial pragmatic speaker’s stance turns semantic and then recurrently pragmatic and semantic:

C1: **Pragmatic** speaker’s stance → **semantic** speaker’s stance

↓

C2: **Pragmatic** speaker’s stance → **semantic** speaker’s stance

The above analysis also applies to other similar Hebrew question constructions (*mi yodea kama* ‘who knows how much’ > *lo mi yodea kama/ mi yishma* ‘who will hear’ > *lo mi yishma*) that were later recruited for the same discursive motivation: expressing the speaker’s stance (negative bias) as *lo mi yodea ma* and have evolved similarly down the same path of forward cyclic change. These are all cases of question constructions turning into intensifying exclamatives and then potentially to down-toners. This ‘bigger’ cycle can be witnessed crosslinguistically; see [Figure 13.1](#) (see also [Bardenstein 2022a](#))

Cyclic Example 2: The **Backward** Rhetorical-Question Cycle (or: Stance-Expressing Cycle, the case of Hebrew *ma ze* ‘what is this’/‘so’, see [Bardenstein \(2022a\)](#)):

Discursive motivation: **Expressing speaker’s negative stance.**

Cline I: Recruitment and mobilization of a question construction (*ma ze-x?* ‘what is this-x?’) to pragmatically express the speaker’s strong stance (negative); see example (4) turned semantic via a gradual constructionalization process and grammaticalized as an intensifying exclamative *ma ze-x!* ‘so-x!’ (semantically expressing the speaker’s stance: positive); see example (5):

- (4) *Ma ze haya le-ben kish?*
 What this was.M to-son of Kish
Hagam Shaul ba-nevi'im?
 The.also Saul among.the-prophets

‘What is this that come-onto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?’ [1 Samuel, 10:11]

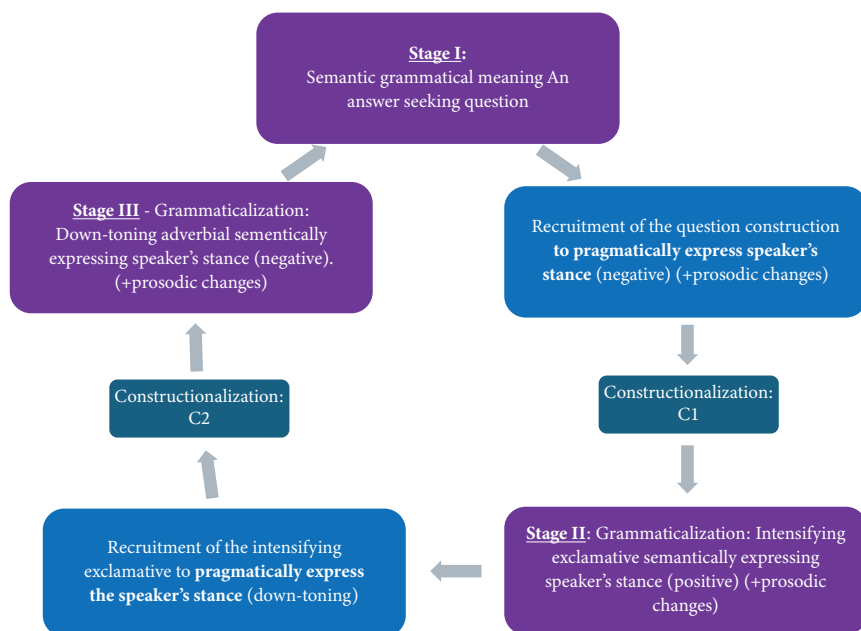


Figure 13.1 The stance-expressing forward cycle (+ prosodic changes). Note: C (1, 2) stands for Cline

- (5) (Ze) *ma-ze ta' im!*
 (It is) what is this tasty!
 It is so tasty!
 (Bardenstein 2020)

Cline II: The grammaticalized intensifying exclamative *ma ze-x!* 'so-x!' led to a loosened meaning of the original rhetorically biased question *ma ze?!* 'what is this?!' (as expressing negative stance), and so counter-loosening took place along with the duplication (explication) of the *ze* 'this' component, creating the colloquial *ma ze ze*, literally: 'what is **this this**?!' idiomatically: 'what is this'; see example (6). See also Figure 13.2. For a similar interesting process see the case of *zehu ze*, literally: 'this is he this', idiomatically: 'that's it'!

6. *Ma ze ze?!
 What this this*
 (www.youtube.com/channel/UCZ1waxvmUMcOjQhUXogrbwA)

Cyclicity: Recurrently expressing the speaker's negative stance via the same question construction that was loosened and bleached—thus counter-loosening it to

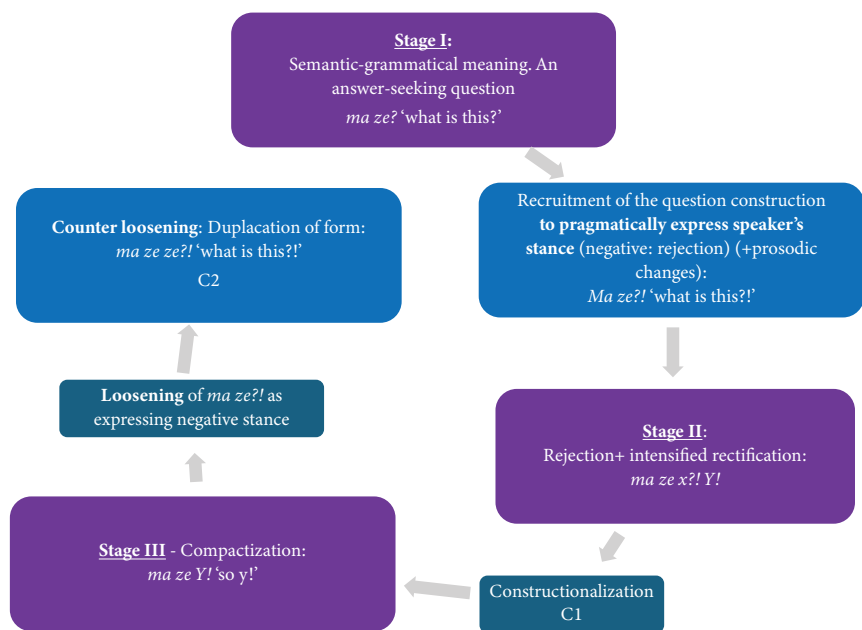


Figure 13.2 Stance-expressing backward cycle

serve the same motivation via the same mechanism under the same cline, thereby creating a duplicated form (Figure 13.2).

Let's now examine the Jespersen Cycle, which can be viewed both as a forward cycle and a backward cycle.

Cline I: Speaker's argumentative needs to hyperbolize and be dramatic (e.g. *no one was in class* when in fact a few or two out of 100 students were in class; see also Carston 2002, 2011) led to loosened use (weakening) of the explicit strong negation (*ne/non/ma*) that, in turn, led to the need to argumentatively strengthen (counter-loosen) it. For that purpose, recruitment and mobilization of a minimizer was chosen (it could have also been a maximizer, as in the case of English 'not at all' or Hebrew *bixlal lo* 'not in general' < 'not at all'; see Bardenstein 2016) to pragmatically strengthen negation (creating implicitly strong negation), that in turn led to constructionalization processes (*ne...pas/non...mica/ma...(i)shi*), expressing explicit strong negation; see example (7):

- (7) *ma ba'aref shi*
not know.I thing
'I don't know anything'

Mid-cline processes: Linguistic automatization and conditioning of the strengthened negation construction elements (*ne+pas/non+mica/ma+(i)shi*) led to an

economical shortening need followed by the ellipsis of the main explicit negator (*ne/non/ma*), thus leading to the metonymization of *pas/mica/(i)shi*, semantically conveying negation on their own; see example (8):

- (8) *baarafsh* (colloquial)
 know.not
 ‘I don’t know’

Cline II (back to initial stage): Speaker’s need to hyperbolize and be dramatic once again led to loosened use (weakening) of the explicit strong negators (suffix *(i)shi*) that in turn led to the recurrent need to argumentatively strengthen (counter-loosen) it and to the recurrent recruitment and mobilization of the same minimizer to pragmatically strengthen negation once again, thus creating a duplicated form; see example (9).⁵

- (9) *baarafsh shi*
 Know.not thing
 ‘I don’t know anything’

This above cycle demonstrates the inter-connected clines (C1+mid-cline+C2).

Cyclicity à la Jespersen: The recurrent use of the same discursive motivation and functional use—strengthening a loosened negation:

Initial strong negation is weakened, then is strengthened and weakened again, then back to being strengthened (Jespersen 1917).

Strong negation → weak negation → strong negation → weak negation → strong negation

Forward Cyclicity: Recruitment and mobilization of the minimizer to express strong negation for both consecutively inter-connected clines (C1+C2). The first and second negations are not the same ones (the first is preverbal *ma*, the second is suffixal *shi*).

Backward Cyclicity: Recurrent loosening (weakening) of the negation was counter-loosened via the recruitment and mobilization of a minimizer. In this case, it was the same minimizer, thus creating the so-called doubling of form: *baarafish ishi*.

Examine the following elaborated cyclic evolution of Palestinian Arabic *(i)shi*:

A. Conceptual meaning= *(i)shi* is a noun: ‘a thing’

1. Hyperbolic use of negation led to loosening/weakening of negation

⁵ In this case, for the same purpose speakers could have used an alternative minimizer rather than the original one, as in the case of French *pas du tout*, ‘not at all’. However, this would not have created a duplicated form.

2. Discursive need: argumentative negation strengthening.
3. Recruitment and mobilization of *(i)shi* as a minimizer to pragmatically strengthen negation, creating implicit strong negation.
4. Constructionalization of *(i)shi* under the scope of negation, followed by automatization and conditioning of the two negation elements (*ma... (i)shi*), created explicit strong negation.
5. The need for shortening led to the ellipsis and metonymizing of the main negator *ma*.
6. Grammaticalization = *shi*= ‘not’, as a postverbal negation suffix (explicit negation).
↓
7. Re-recruitment and mobilization of *(i)shi* as a minimizer once again to strengthen the ‘new’ negation, thus creating a double-form cycle: *baraf(i)shshi* ‘I don’t know anything’, lit.: I know **a thing a thing**.

Stage 6 in the above cycle demonstrates recurrent recruitment of **the same** exact item (*(i)shi* to express the intended function (in this case: a minimizer to strengthen negation), but generally speaking any negation strengthener could have potentially been elected to fulfil this speaker’s need (e.g. the Hebrew maximizer *bixlal* ‘at all’; see [Bardenstein 2016](#)). In general, the choice of a linguistic element to express a certain discursive need might change over time (see French *ainz* (‘before’)/*plutôt*, [Hansen 2020a/b](#)). This type of cyclicity is what [Hansen \(2014, 2018a/b\)](#) refers to as an ‘onomasiological’ cycle, as different linguistic items are used cyclically within different time frames for the same or similar function. In [Hansen’s \(2018b: 11\)](#) words:

The onomasiological perspective ... starts with a particular meaning or function and aims to discover what specific forms can express that meaning or function in a given language. Thus, if we observe that a similar context-level meaning/function or set of meanings/functions is renewed several times by etymologically unrelated forms with similar content-level source meanings, I propose that we have a case of onomasiological cyclicity.

However, choosing the very same item cyclically is considered a ‘semasiological cycle’ in Hansen’s analysis. In [Hansen’s \(2018b: 5\)](#) words:

When studying linguistic meaning from a semasiological perspective, we take our point of departure in one or more linguistic forms and look at the meanings and functions those forms may have. Accordingly, if one and the same form, or several etymologically closely related forms, repeatedly develop(s) similar context-level

functions from a similar point of departure at the content level, I propose that we are dealing with semasiological cyclicity.

This type of cyclicity is also defined in accordance with the constructionalist conception of grammar (Hoffman and Trousdale 2013; Traugott and Trousdale 2013; Hansen 2021b), whereby a linguistic construction is defined as the semiotic union of the form and meaning of a linguistic item or expression. More specifically, it depicts a correlation between an initially implicit meaning and a certain form, which then gradually turns into an explicit union. When shifting ‘forward’, the cycle thus explicates an initially implicit function.

13.2.1.2 Foregrounding (e.g. Orifjonava 2022) facilitated by bridging contexts (Evans and Wilkins 2000)

Language change is not merely the result of problem-solving and fulfilling the speaker’s discursive needs but is also a result of background/foreground reversals (Heine 1992). Evans and Wilkins (2000) discussed what they call ‘Bridging Contexts’. They claim that the reason why a new function (in terms of distribution and interpretation) might be acquired by an item is generally assumed to be the use of that item in bridging contexts, which they define as environments compatible not only with the original function but also with the future function. The evolving item is therefore predicted to occur in bridging contexts at recurrent rates just before the change. The new function is fully acquired when the item occurs in switch contexts (see also Heine 2002) that are only compatible with the new function. For example, Heine (2002: 90) discusses the change from volitive to proximative for Swahili item *taka*:

Stage I:

a a- na- taka ku- ni- ita
he-PRES-want INF-me- call
‘he wants to call me’

Stage II:

a- na- taka ku- fa
he-PRES-want INF-die

- (i) ‘he wants to die’
- (ii) ‘he is about to die’

Stage III:

M- ti u- na- taka ku- anguka
C3-tree C3-PRES-PROX INF-fall
‘the tree is about to fall’

In this above example, Stage I already serves as a bridging context since the inference is that ‘if he wants to call me, he’ll probably do so soon’. This inference was later foregrounded and turned into meaning (= ‘about to’) at stage II which demonstrates both meanings: ‘wants to’ + ‘about to’. Stage III, however, demonstrates the case of a ‘switch context’ in which only the ‘new’ meaning (‘about to’) applies, as a tree is inanimate and cannot want anything. It is generally agreed that if an expression has two meanings A and B, meaning B often came into existence because a regularly occurring context supports an inference-driven contextual enrichment of A to B. Similarly to the previously mentioned motivation (fulfilling speakers’ needs), this motivation for meaning change is inference-based too, and also turns inference into meaning.

This type of process (foregrounding facilitated by bridging contexts) often leads to a special kind of ‘cycle in disguise’: the ‘co-occurrence’ cycle. For example, the well-known inference-based development of *movement* verbs towards *a goal to future* in English and other languages (see Heine and Kuteva 2002; Bardenstein and Gvura 2023)⁶ undergoing foregrounding via bridging contexts, thus allowing for the creation of a cycle of co-occurrence: one that includes both the ‘new’ explicited (grammaticalized) future construction *Ving to-V*, and the original movement verb that can be used in it. For example, Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca (1994) discuss ‘motion to futurate’ readings of English verb *to go* as follows (see 10a–c):

- a. I’m **going to** the chip shop.
- b. You **are going to** die.
- c. The tree **is going to** rot.

In the examples above, the bridging context in (b) backgrounds the motion reading, which remains accessible in a scenario where a person is making a trip to a certain location in order to die there. The switch context in (c) excludes a motion interpretation, since trees are not normally believed to move. It only accepts a futurate reading that can, in turn, turn cyclic due to potential co-occurrence of the grammaticalized construction with the original movement verb *go*:

- d. I am **going to go** to the chip shop

This type of cyclicity (‘co-occurrence cyclicity’) is a cyclicity in disguise, demonstrating a double form of polysemizing items.⁷ The above construction *going to-v*, for example, can be used with practically any verb (e.g. *going to see*,

⁶ Bardenstein and Gvura (2023) also discuss the creation of ‘near’ vs. ‘undefined’ and ‘unfulfilled’ future constructions via temporal-spatial links of the movement verb and its action goal.

⁷ Co-occurrence cyclicity is also evident in other polysemized items, such as the case of English *but* that bears more than one meaning (following grammaticalization processes). Therefore, two meanings can co-occur, as in the following example (one concessive, one exclusive): ‘Maria Pia Piscitelli may indeed have competently handled the role of Mary Queen of Scots and its taxing bel canto

going to teach, going to take, etc.) and one of those verbs can also be the verb *go*: *going to go*. This co-occurrence cyclicity is also evident crosslinguistically, as demonstrated by the following examples from Contemporary Hebrew (10a–b) and Spoken Palestinian Arabic (10c) (also see [Bardenstein and Gvura 2023](#)):

10. (a) *Hu* **holex** *lalexet*
 He **going.M** to.go
 ‘He is **going** to go’
- (b) *Hu* **omed** *laamod*
 He **standing.M** to.stand up
 ‘He is about to stand up’
- (c) *Ana* **rax** *arux*
 I **going** to.go
 ‘I am **going** to go’

Palestinian Arabic took the co-occurrence cycle one step further due to the shortening motivation, transforming the future marking into a prefix (see (10d)):

- (d) *Ana* **xarux**
 I going.to go
 ‘I am going to go’

In the above examples it is evident that while physically going to a location normally involves a purpose (an intention), that inference-based (implicit) intention to perform some action was foregrounded by speakers and gradually ‘took over’ via bridging contexts and became the expression’s conventional meaning, thus explicating the original inference.

Therefore, what is evident is the following:

Stage I: A bridging context based on the **pragmatic future inference** of the state of affairs (‘if he wants to call me, he’ll probably do so soon’). This inference was later foregrounded and turned into meaning (= ‘about to-V’) that in turn demonstrates both meanings: ‘wants to-V’ + ‘about to-V’.

Stage II: A ‘switch context’ in which only the ‘new’ meaning applies. Thus, ‘about to-V’ became an ‘independent’ **explicit, semantic future** construction. However, in this case **co-occurrence cyclicity** might arise, as demonstrated below:

vocal acrobatics, **but** she is **but** a pale reflection of Sutherland’s glory’ (www.midnighteast.com/mag/?p=33381).

Stage III, Co-Occurrence Cyclicity: The polysemizing linguistic item can create co-occurrence cyclicity, as in the following example: I am **going** to **go** soon.

13.2.1.3 Automatization, linguistic conditioning, and metonymy

Metonymy is the outcome of parts representing their whole or extension of meaning via associative item, as [Dancygier and Sweetser \(2014: 5\)](#) argue: Metonymy is about relationships of correlations—things that occur together in experience, so that we associate them and can use the word for one to evoke the other. Salient parts do evoke their wholes, and salient subcategories evoke the larger categories of which they are parts.

[Traugott and Dasher \(2002\)](#) suggest that the chief cognitive mechanism underlying semantic changes is metonymy, broadly construed (i.e. understood) as ‘simultaneous or sequential co-presence of elements within the same conceptual framework’ ([Panther and Thornburg 2003: 712](#)). In accordance with those definitions, [Bybee \(2002, 2006a\)](#) argues that with repetition, sequences of units that were previously independent come to be processed as a single unit or chunk via cognitive automatization. Automatization, therefore, creates unification of two linked functions or states of affairs (that Dancygier and Sweetser called ‘things’), then only represented by the latter. In other words, this motivation for change is the linguistically expressed cognitive automatization and the result is often that of a metonymy. As already claimed, the cognitive linkage can be either between functions (e.g. the Jespersen Cycle that came about due to a constructionalized and metonymized linkage between negation and minimization) or between states of affairs (e.g. Hebrew *herim yadayim*, literally ‘raised his hands’, which also means ‘gave up’. Basically, language evolution exhibits the old principle of ‘tell me who your friends are, and I will tell you who you are (or will be)’).

Although language is highly evolved, it is not totally distinct from other neuromotor and cognitive abilities ([Bybee 1998](#)). And like processes of automatization, processes of conditioning do not just apply to language—language simply expresses such extra-linguistic processes that can be described as such:

An initial A (a state of affairs) leads to/follows/involves B (a state of affairs).

↓

A and B are associatively linked.

↓

Automatization/conditioning of A + B.

↓

Unification: A is linguistically represented by B. B is ‘reanalysed’ (see [Traugott 2011](#)) and a metonymy is born.

The *herim gaba* ‘raise an eyebrow’ example demonstrates a physical (facial) reaction to a certain event-based state of affairs (in this case, something surprising). When something surprising happens, people often raise their eyebrows. Thus, in Hebrew, *herim gaba* ‘(he) raised his eyebrow’ is polysemous metonymy. It could be used literally but can also be used to express that someone was (negatively) surprised.

It is important to emphasize that such cases involve two types of classic metonymies: EFFECT FOR CAUSE and PART FOR WHOLE.

Many well-known examples of metonymic shift involve part for whole (often called ‘synecdoche’), such as the case of the Jespersen Cycle which results in a PART FOR WHOLE metonymy. In addition, the classical examples of *Fridge* (short for the name of the manufacturing company *Frigidaire*) and *Jacuzzi*, used for the type of object rather than the Italian manufacturer’s family name. Here, it is the names that gradually ‘took over’ to express the lexical meaning of the automatized cognitive linkage. At first, ‘to buy a Jacuzzi’ represented the longing ‘to buy a [hot tub made by] Jacuzzi’. Later, ‘to buy a Jacuzzi’ expanded to any such hot tub, even when other companies manufactured a similar product. Thereafter, *Jacuzzi* lexicalized.

Most importantly, these cases can be cyclic in disguise as well, as co-occurring cycles: due to the changed meaning of *Jacuzzi*, one can imagine the following co-occurrence: ‘**Jacuzzi’s Jacuzzi** is the best’.

Therefore, what is evident is the following:

Stage I: Linguistic conditioning of A (e.g. the name *Jacuzzi*) with B (hot tubs) led to the metonymization of A linguistically representing B (unification); thus, A is reanalysed. But this order is not necessary, as B can represent A as well (e.g. *herim gaba* ‘raised his eyebrow’; see above).

Stage II, Co-Occurrence Cyclicity: The polysemic linguistic item (e.g. *Jacuzzi*) creates a co-occurrence cycle, as in the above-mentioned example: The **Jacuzzi’s Jacuzzi** is the best.

However, one must not forget that metonymy does not serve as a motivation for change but rather is an outcome of processes that arise as a result of such motivations (e.g. linguistic automatization/conditioning and economical shortening; see [Section 13.2.1.4](#)).

13.2.1.4 Economical motivation for meaning change (shortening), or less form for more meaning (Hopper and Traugott 1993/2003)

Von der [Gabelentz \(1901\)](#) saw grammaticalization as resulting from the interaction between two opposite motivations: clarity versus economy. On the one hand, speakers seek to be understood and therefore strive to make their messages

clear and coherent (in this chapter, this motivation falls under the umbrella of ‘speaker’s discursive needs’), but on the other hand, there is a general need not to spend more (linguistic) energy than is strictly necessary and therefore to prefer shortened, economical forms over more elaborate ones. These forces might clash but both are involved in meaning change. Note that shortening is expressed in various ways and can also include processes of ellipsis (see Merchant 2013) and compactization (Bardenstein 2016).

In the case of the Jespersen Cycle, as shown above, ellipsis is involved (deletion of explicit main negator). However, the negative cycle is not the only cycle that involves ellipsis, and it exhibits change that is far more general. For example, Trudgill’s (1995) *do* becoming a conjunction (conditional causative connector) because of ellipsis: *do* in East Anglian English has become a conjunction equivalent to *otherwise* as a result of the deletion of *because if* [Pronoun], as in the following example: *Don’t you sleep there, [because if you] do you’ll be laughing on the wrong side of your face.*

Therefore, what is evident is the following:

Stage I: The general need not to spend more (linguistic) energy than is strictly necessary and therefore to prefer shortened, economical forms over more elaborate ones creates a polysemy (e.g. East Anglian *do*).

Stage II: The polysemized linguistic item (e.g. *do*) creates a co-occurrence cycle, as in the following (also above-mentioned) example:

- (11) **Do** not sleep there [but if you] **do** you’ll be laughing on the wrong side of your face.

Until now we have discussed intra-language change, but linguistic change and cycles of change also occur due to external inter-language factors, often via a ‘ping-pong’ effect as elaborated in the following sub-section.

13.2.1.5 Language contact

One of the most interesting questions regarding meaning change is the influence of language contact. Mainly, does it motivate change or is it merely a mechanism (especially the cases of word borrowing and ‘grammatical replication’; cf. Heine and Kuteva 2015)? While some cases are quite transparent in regard to their original language (e.g. English *bon appétit* borrowed from French), other cases are less so, as in the case of Hebrew *hallelujah*, literally: *halelu* ‘praise.P’ and *ya* ‘Lord’: ‘praise ye Jehovah’, ‘praise the lord’ that has later expanded (in both Hebrew and English) to be used as an expression of praise rather than an exhortation to praise.

Heine and Kuteva (2015), who examined ‘grammatical replication’, focused on the grammaticalization processes that it involves, highlighting the extent of osmosis in linguistic systems, making obvious that language boundaries are not so

rigidly defined, and borrowings can affect any component of the language architecture. They also claim that any part of language structure can be transferred from one language to another (also see [Thomason and Kaufman 1988](#): 14; [Harris and Campbell 1995](#): 149–50; [Aikhenvald 2002](#): 11–13). However, even they acknowledge the fact that this transfer is essentially in accordance with general principles of grammaticalization, and that the principles are the same irrespective of whether language contact is involved or not, and of whether it concerns unilateral or multilateral transfer. Therefore, language contact creates meaning change interlingually. The mobilized item, in turn, might then undergo change in its own right via the four above-mentioned motivations.

Internal meaning changes occur only once inter-lingual items/functions are mobilized and ‘get into the system’ of the target language. But language contact-based change can also be cyclic, categorized either as a ‘forward cycle’, inasmuch as its development is conducted forwardly, or as a ‘backwards cycle’, given that the item returns to its mother language. One example of such a ‘ping-pong’ (reborrowing) effect can be witnessed with Classical Arabic *ṣabāba* (originally a noun meaning ‘longing’) which was borrowed into Hebrew and changed into meaning a ‘celebration’ (this meaning was evident in the 1970s to 1980s). Then, a ‘new’ *sababa* changed into a versatile discourse marker, also borrowed by spoken Palestinian Arabic. It is a marvellous reborrowing (see [Watson 2002](#)) or ‘ping-pong effect’ that is not evident in any other dialect of Arabic (see [Bardenstein and Ben-Barry 2025](#)).

Therefore, what is evident in the case of cyclic language contact is the following:

Cline I: Borrowing of linguistic item A1 from a mother language (the initial language, point of departure language), giving rise to the (re)borrowing process for a specific linguistic function (often based on speakers’ discursive needs). This borrowing often creates internal changes within the target language and item A1 thus changes its meaning into A2.

Cline II: Reborrowing of A2 back into the mother language. This, in turn, might create internal meaning change once again (A3), and so on.

All in all, while language contact inter-lingually motivates meaning change, it does not motivate internal processes of meaning change but is only subject to the target language patterns of change (once ‘in the system’) just as any other item.

This type of cycle is considered a ‘backward’ cycle because there is a shift from language A to language B and then back to language A (or one of its dialects). However, it does not involve loosening and counter-loosening of meanings like the intra-language ‘backward cycle’. Rather, reborrowing and ‘grammatical reduplication’ of meanings are involved. Therefore, it will be considered a special case of

the ‘backward’ cycle via the direction of shift only. The intra-language ‘backward’ cycle will be elaborated next.

13.2.2 More about counter-loosening and the ‘backward’ cycle

The linguistic operation of counter-loosening, a previously loosened or bleached linguistic item, cannot be an initial motivation for change. It occurs only after change has already happened and is conducted in order to regain or reglorify meanings that had been loosened or bleached over the path of history. This often happens when an evolved and modified linguistic item comes to express a ‘more or less’ interpretation (Carston 2002) and speakers wish to convey their message via hyperbolic uses (exaggeration and linguistic drama); see Carston (2011), who suggests that examples such as (12)–(13) below are examples of a domain for the quantifier (i.e. *everyone* and *nothing*) to range over, that in turn has to be contextually inferred.

(12) Everyone got drunk.

(13) I’ve got nothing to wear to the party.

In the first example, ‘everybody’ can in fact be *most* people, but the speaker uses *everybody* to strengthen their conveyed message using exaggeration. This strengthens their claim so that their message will be strongly conveyed; that is, ‘the party was a success’ or alternatively, ‘the party was a huge failure’ (depending on the context). In the second example, ‘nothing’ can actually refer to ‘nothing I approve of’ or ‘nothing that looks good on me’ and so on, but the speaker uses ‘nothing’ to argumentatively strengthen their claim, or more accurately in this case: their wardrobe-related frustration.

Counter-loosening basically makes sure that certain meanings do not get lost down the path of linguistic meaning change because they are discursively needed. While the forward cycle is all about creation of new meanings, the ‘backward’ cycle is all about maintaining older meanings: recurrent counter-loosening of certain meanings.

Following Carston (2002) and Bardenstein and Ariel (2022), the assumption is that natural language is not rich enough to offer a one-to-one unique coding for all (or even most) of the concepts that are relevant and useful to communicators. According to Carston (2011), addressees routinely need to adapt the linguistic meaning encoded by a lexeme and to construct the speaker-intended ad hoc concept. In addition, Carston (2002) defines two processes of contextual adaptation: **‘narrowing’** (the communicated concept becoming more specific) and

'loosening.'⁸ The latter of the two, 'loosening', or 'bleaching' (see Sweetser 1990), actually triggers an interpretation that violates the (accurate) definition of the term's linguistic meaning. Thus, Bardenstein and Ariel (2022), following Carston's conceptual discussion, suggest that the concept *straight*, as in *a straight road*, commonly gives rise to a 'more or less straight' ad hoc concept that's only loosely related to the (strict) linguistic meaning of 'straight' (180°). As counter-loosening goes against the process of loosening, speakers tend to explicitly block (or mitigate) the contextual process of loosening, and that is achieved either by using certain words/phrases dedicated to that purpose (i.e. *literally!* *strictly speaking*, postpositive *proper*, Hebrew *mamash* 'really', etc.) or by the recruiting and mobilizing certain linguistic items for that purpose. When this happens recurrently, it is cyclic.

Counter-loosening is not necessarily conducted at the expense of the newly evolved meaning. Meaning change is inevitable and speakers embrace it willingly, but often and at the same time, they wish to maintain the earlier meanings in one way or another (see Hopper 1991; Bardenstein and Ariel 2022), as those are useful and/or relevant to them. There is a constant tension between inevitable meaning change on the one hand and the need to maintain earlier meanings of high relevance and usefulness to speakers on the other.⁹ All in all, the backward cycle's role is all about recurrently making sure that certain meanings of certain items do not get lost.¹⁰

13.2.2.1 Additional examples of the backward cycle

Bardenstein (2019) discusses how the Hebrew *afilu* 'even' was originally composed of three different morphemes: *af* 'also' + *im* 'if' + *lu* 'wish', and was used as a **conditional** item to argumentatively strengthen a previous claim (similarly to English 'even if'). However, *afilu* later further evolved and lost its conditionality (it turned into a more general intensifier). This, in turn, led to a 'backward'-type cycle, counter-loosening conditionality by adding another *im* 'if' to the existing *afilu*, thus creating *afilu im* 'even if' (literally: 'also + if + wish if') to make sure that conditionality would be conveyed. Such cyclic change—'shifting backwards'—is also evident with other items such as the original Mishnaic (third-century rabbinical text) Hebrew *ela* 'if + not' (see Bardenstein and Ariel 2019), changing into *ela*

⁸ Wilson and Carston (2007: 1) rightfully claim that 'narrowing, loosening and metaphorical extension are simply different outcomes of a single interpretive process which creates an ad hoc concept, or occasion-specific sense, based on interaction among encoded concepts, contextual information and pragmatic expectations or principles.'

⁹ Bardenstein and Ariel (2022) found that 'counter-loosening' leads to further meaning changes in the case of truth markers (e.g. Hebrew *mamash* 'really') evolving into intensifiers: counter-loosening is what actually triggers truth markers into becoming intensifiers, but what drives the shift from 'counter-loosening' to 'intensifying' is a similar referential strengthening of the speaker's utterance, true of both 'counter-loosening' and 'intensifying'.

¹⁰ There is constant renewal of intensifiers, as they are highly needed in discourse.

'but' then shifting backwards to counter-loosen and thus regain its linguistic conditionality (which had been bleached), adding another explicit *im* 'if', forming *ela im* 'unless/if not', literally: 'if not if'. Over time, a *ken* 'yes' was added to Mishnaic *ela im* which had been bleached, once again regaining its conditionality.

The cline to shift backward in order to maintain meanings applies to any loosened or bleached meaning that needs counter-loosening. Additional examples of such a cyclic shift backward includes English *all y'all* (used in the Southern United States to include all people being addressed) and French *aujourd'hui*, literally: *au + jour + de + hui* 'on the day of today', later cycling backwards once again, with Modern French *au jour d'aujourd'hui*, literally: 'on the day of on the day of today'; see Figure 13.3.¹¹

Latin → Old French → Middle French → Modern French

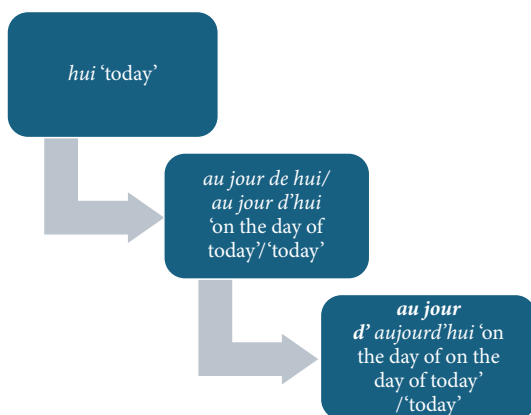


Figure 13.3 The French backward cycle 'today'.

Thus, counter-loosening can be achieved in the following ways (see Figure 13.4):

- By using the same exact form for the desired function, such as Hebrew *afilu im* literally: also + **if** + wish **if**, idiomatically: 'even if', explicating the earlier bleached conditionality.
- By using a different form for the desired function, even via language contact, such as French *aujourd'hui*, literally: *au + jour + de + hui* 'on the **day** of **today**'.
- By using a different form for the desired function and one that bleaches again, adding the same original form for the same purpose, such as *au jour d'aujourd'hui* 'on the day of on the day of today'

¹¹ For a similar diagram, see Deutscher (2006). Counter-loosening can also occur using other 'anti-loosening' devices such as English *literally!* and Hebrew *mamash* 'really' (see Bardenstein and Ariel 2022).

- d. By using the same exact form for the desired meaning and once that bleaches again, adding another form for the same purpose, such as Hebrew *ela im ken*, literally: **if** + not **if** **yes** explicating the earlier bleached conjunctive conditionality ‘unless’.

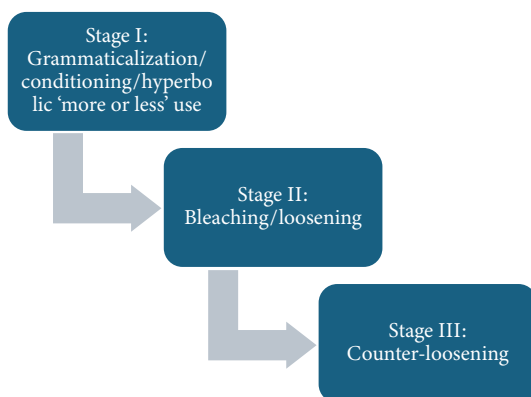


Figure 13.4 The backward cycle.

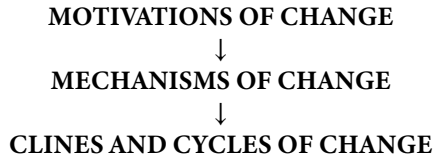
13.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have examined clines and cyclic linguistic processes of meaning change, exploring the reasons behind these phenomena and the mechanisms through which they occur. Although the interplay between new contexts and new meanings has been extensively studied, it has not been done comprehensively. This chapter aims to fill that gap. I define two basic cycles based on their evolutionary direction:

1. The ‘Forward’ Cycle: This cycle involves the creation of new meanings through persistent and inter-related discursive motivations ($A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$ (A)).
2. The ‘Backward’ Cycle: This cycle focuses on maintaining older meanings through recurrent and inter-related ‘counter-loosening’ strategies of previously weakened meanings ($A \leftrightarrow B$).

These definitions expand upon previously established linguistic cycles and integrate various cycles of meaning change. Therefore, these cycles are not seen as distinct linguistic phenomena but as instances of pragmatic-cognitive forces driving meaning change, regardless of ellipsis or negation. I have discussed crosslinguistic (or ‘universal’) motivations, clines, and cycles of meaning change. Following [Greenberg \(1991\)](#), [Bybee \(2006\)](#), and [Cristofaro \(2019\)](#), this chapter

argues that true universals of language are not synchronic patterns but the motivations and mechanisms of change that create these patterns. The following diagram summarizes the universality of meaning change discussed in this chapter:



Languages might seem very different ‘on the surface,’ but they share much more than meets the eye and ear. They are motivated and driven by similar factors that are, in turn, realized in a variety of nevertheless predictable, and potentially cyclic, ways.

The rise and fall of Occitan *be(n)* and *pla(n)*

A semantic-pragmatic cycle?

Sandra Paoli

14.1 Introduction

Language change is understood, from a functionalist perspective, as the result of language in use, originating in both the ways language is used by the speaker and understood by the addressee. At the semantic level, changes are brought about by ‘the pragmatic uses to which speakers or writers and addressees or readers put language, and most especially out of the preferred strategies that speakers/writers use in communicating with addressees’ (Traugott and Dasher 2002: xi).

Recent research (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a; Hansen 2014, 2018a, 2018b, 2020b) has put forward the idea that semantic-pragmatic changes can occur in cyclical ways, similarly to the cycles that have been suggested to be operative crosslinguistically at the morphosyntactic level (recently by van Gelderen 2011, but already noticed at the beginning of the last century, notably by Jespersen 1917, formally recognized as the ‘Jespersen Cycle’ by Dahl 1979: 88). This idea of cyclicity is rooted in the pragmatic motivation of semantic change: more specifically, ‘it may be that when the content-level source item of a context-level (i.e. pragmatic) marker is replaced, then the new item is likely eventually to become the source of context-level functions similar to those of the item it replaced’ (Hansen 2014: 164).¹ In terms of what differentiates a cycle from other instances of language change, Hansen (2018b: 129) specifies that semantic-pragmatic cycles are ‘found when the evolution from a particular type of content-level meaning or function to one or more particular types of context-level meanings or functions *takes place more than once within a given language and/or across two languages, one of which is the direct descendant of the other*’ (emphasis mine).

¹ ‘Content-level’ and ‘context-level’ are terms introduced by Hansen (2008) to further refine the more traditional distinction between ‘semantic’ and ‘pragmatic’ uses of lexical items: in semantic change, a shift between coded, semantic meaning and a context-dependent, discourse-level meaning can be often observed, especially in the diachronic development of pragmatic markers.

Within this idea of cyclicity, two trajectories can be recognized, the cycle of a particular lexical item or of etymologically closely related items (semasiological or form-based) and the cycle of a given meaning/function (onomasiological or function-based) that is renewed several times through etymologically unrelated lexical items (Hansen 2018a: 57–64).

Crosslinguistic tendencies for lexical items to reproduce given paths of development at the diachronic level have long been recognized (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 6). These are partly due to the restricted set of lexical items that, for any given grammatical phenomenon, are likely to be sources of grammaticalization, and partly to the step-by-step developments that delimit and highly restrict the changes that can occur (Traugott and Heine 1991: 8). These grammaticalization paths or clines (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 7) can be understood as representing sequential changes in form (e.g. the prototypical grammaticalization cline ‘content item > grammatical word > clitic > inflectional affix > zero’, which refers to both changes from lexical to grammatical and from free to bound element), or tendencies to develop similar meanings given the same (or similar) source meanings (e.g. one of the many examples listed in Heine and Kuteva’s (2002) ‘Source-Target Lexicon’, spatial motion > expression of future tense/aspect). As well as developing similar meaning, we see that over time lexical items with similar meanings can also develop similar pragmatic functions. Pons Bordería and Llopis Cardona (2020: 323) note that ‘[b]efore grammaticalization occurs, the items involved in a cycle show a similar source meaning (semantic resemblance). ... Sharing similar meanings is a precondition of which the outcome might be the development of similar functions’.

Given the undeniable similarity, at least superficially, between a grammaticalization cline that follows a spiralling path and an onomasiological semantic-pragmatic cycle, it is natural to ask how the two differ, if at all.

This chapter sets out to attempt answer this question through the exploration of the development of two etymologically unrelated lexical items, Occitan *be(n)* and *pla(n)*, that potentially exemplify an instance of an onomasiological semantic-pragmatic cycle, both moving through the similar path of manner adverb > degree adverb > attitudinal sentential adverb > modal-particle-like element and also, crucially, differentiating themselves in developing different usages.

After presenting the behaviour of their Latin ancestors *BĒNĒ* and *PLĀNĒ* in Section 14.2, the development of *be(n)* and *pla(n)* from their first occurrences in the 11th/12th centuries through to modern times is discussed in Sections 14.3, 14.4, and 14.5. These are followed by a discussion of the nature of the developments exhibited by the two elements in Section 14.6, and some conclusions follow in Section 14.7.

14.2 Latin

14.2.1 BĚŇĚ

The Latin adverb BĚŇĚ, which derived from the archaic form *DUENĒD (> *benĒd > benĒ > BĚŇĚ through iambic reduction (cf. [Aslanov 2012](#): 29, referring to [Vaan 2008](#): 49)), was already polysemous in the Classical period. [Lewis and Short \(1879](#): 229–231) identify a number of meanings that it could express, all centring around two main usages, as a verb modifier and as an intensifier. As a verb modifier, BĚŇĚ was first and foremost a manner adverb that could express both concrete (referring to physical or external goodness, usefulness, ornament, comfort, etc., (1a)) and abstract (referring to perception, ability, judgement, will, etc., (1b)) properties:

- (1) a. PATREM FAMILIAE VILLAM RUSTICAM **BENE** AEDIFICATAM HABERE EXPEDIT
(Cato, *De agri cultura*, III:2)
‘It is a good idea for the master to have a well-built barn.’
- b. DE MEDICO ET TU **BENE** EXISTIMARI SCRIBIS (Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, XVI: 4, 1)
‘You write that the doctor is well thought (spoken) of.’

Within the latter, in its basic meaning of approval, BĚŇĚ also expressed moral evaluations such as ‘honourably, bravely, gloriously’ especially in expressions such as ‘live, die, fight, carry oneself honourably/bravely’, and so on (2a), and ‘rightly, correctly’ when co-occurring with verbs of saying such as ‘admonish, advise’, and so on (2b).

- (2) a. **BENE** MORI
‘To die honorably.’
- b. **BENE** DIXIT, AC MIHI ISTUC NON IN MENTEM VENERAT
(Terence, *Eunuchus*, 451)
‘He speaks well / he is right, and that had not occurred to me.’

At the same time, it also functioned as a degree adverb: BĚŇĚ could modify adjectives (3a) and adverbs ((3b–c), with a meaning equivalent to *VALDE* ‘very, very much’), but also verbs (3d) when these involved a notion of gradability in their semantics ([Kühner and Stegmann 1955](#): 1, 793; [Hofmann and Szantyr 1965](#): 171). With verbs, BĚŇĚ expressed the meaning of completeness,² and, similarly,

² [Bolinger \(1972](#): 29) comments on the ‘semantically complex’ nature of English *well*, which includes semantic elements of ‘approval’ as well as ‘fulfilment’ in its meaning. Closely connected to *fulfilment* are

in collocation with expressions of size and time (and, later, numbers), it conveyed the sense of fullness/intensity (3e).

- (3) a. VIDEO EUM ESSE **BENE ROBUSTUM ATQUE EXERCITATUM**
(Cicero, *In Caecilium*, XV: 48)
‘I see that he is very vigorous and practised.’
- b. **BENE MANE** HAEC SCRIPSI (Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, IV: 9, 2)
‘I wrote this very early in the morning.’
- c. **BENE LIBENTER** VICTITAS (Terence, *Eunuchus*, V: 8, 44)
‘You live with much pleasure.’
- d. **BENE DISSIMULATUM** AMOREM (Terence, *The Woman of Andros*, I: 1, 132)
‘Entirely disguised love.’
- e. ET DURAVIT **BENE PER TRES EBDOMADAS** (Anonymous,
Chronicon Placentinum)
‘And it lasted for three full weeks.’

In all the above instances in which it modified a phrase, be it adjectival, verbal, or adverbial, **BĒNĒ** had scope over that specific phrase.

In a further attested use (Rosén 2009), **BĒNĒ** functions as a so-called attitudinal sentential adverb expressing a positive evaluation of a proposition (hence taking scope over the entire proposition); as such, it translates as ‘luckily, fortunately, auspiciously’:

- (4) **BENE** MIHI EUENIRE, QUOD MITTAR AD MORTEM (Cicero, *Tusculanes*, I: XLI)
‘That it is fortunate for me to be sent to death’ (from Rosén 2009: 425, ex. 87)

Rosén (2009: 425) also notes that it is the preposing of **BĒNĒ** to the left periphery in the cleft construction in (4) that gives it the attitudinal sentential-adverb interpretation: should **BĒNĒ** occur in the right periphery, as an afterthought, it would have a degree-adverb reading.

It can therefore be concluded that, already in Classical Latin, **BĒNĒ** was polysemous, performing a number of functions that showed it could have narrow scope (either sentence-internally, over a given phrase) or wide scope (over the whole sentence). Polysemy is the starting point for a systematic understanding of semantic change (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 11) in which the shift from meaning A to meaning B necessarily involves a stage where both A and B are available.

also the notions of ‘perfectivity’ and ‘perfection’, referring to an action being carried towards completion (cf. its contrast with *imperfectivity* and *imperfection*), which naturally develops into the meaning ‘completely’.

The polysemy displayed by *BĒNĒ* was therefore the result of a series of semantic shifts that were underway. The manner adverb and degree adverb uses of *BĒNĒ* can be considered as contributing to the content level of the proposition (in Hansen's 2008: 16 sense), while its use as an attitudinal sentential adverb belongs to the context level.

Let us sketch a developmental path.

In its most basic function, *BĒNĒ* was an adverb of positive evaluation, expressing the speaker's subjective take on the manner a state or event unfolded. From bringing a positive evaluation on a process, a manner adverb such as *BĒNĒ* often implied the process having taken place thoroughly, exhaustively, and completely. Verbs of cognition make a particularly favourable environment for this extension to take place, affording bridging contexts; that is, opportunities for an expansion of meaning (Evans and Wilkins 2000: 550; Heine 2002). *Understanding something well*, for example, equals to understanding it *thoroughly* and *completely*: quality and degree of understanding are metonymically connected but cognitively intertwined. The new meaning is compatible with the modification of scalar adjectives and nouns, with which it appears first, with verbs that include a notion of gradability in their semantics, and then, with numbers, in which it conveys a sense of fullness. Its use with adjectives presents a further opportunity for semantic expansion, cementing the small shift from completeness to high intensity, committing it to its degree adverb use. It is when co-occurring with gradable adjectives of negative evaluation that *BĒNĒ* divests itself from any links to positive evaluation and shifts to the pure expression of high intensity. Finally, a broadening in scope allows a further extension of its positive evaluative function (as in (4)), and *BĒNĒ* becomes an attitudinal sentential adverb with scope over the whole proposition.

14.2.2 *PLĀNĒ*

In Classical Latin we also find another adverb with a very similar range of meanings, albeit occurring much less frequently,³ *PLĀNĒ*, from the adjective *PLĀNUS* 'even, flat', but also 'simple, plain, clear, obvious'.

Similarly to *BĒNĒ*, *PLĀNĒ* also had two main meanings: a manner adverb that could variously mean 'evenly, simply, clearly, plainly' (5a) and an intensifier 'wholly, entirely, utterly, completely, thoroughly, quite' (5b).

³ Logeion (www.logeion.uchicago.edu) reports *BĒNĒ* as the 324th most frequent word, and *PLĀNĒ* as 'unranked', since it appears in the corpus fewer than 50 times. Although the Logeion corpus does not include all existing Latin texts, they can be taken as representative of a general frequency trend of the two adverbs.

- (5) a. SED UT APPELLANT QUI **PLANE** ET LATINE LOQUUNTUR (Cicero, *Philippic*, 7: 17)
 ‘But I do so like those who speak plain Latin (i.e. right out, without circumlocution)’.
- b. QUOD RELIQUOS COHEREDES CONVENISTI, FECISTI **PLANE** BENE (Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, XIII.6: 2)
 ‘You did quite well meeting the remaining coheirs.’

Finally, *PLĀNĒ* could be used in affirmative answers to express complete agreement, reported, in Lewis and Short (1879: 1384), as an anteclassical usage (6a). It also displayed what Rosén (2009: 342) labels a ‘modal-particle’ usage, conveying ‘the writer/speaker’s view and estimate of its validity and actuality as well as of its relevance to the current situation or immediate context’ and clarifying ‘the writer/speaker’s emotional state and intention’ (Rosén 2009: 321). Considering the wider context, *PLĀNĒ* in (6b) seems to act at the sentential level, much along the lines of *BĒNĒ* as an attitudinal sentential adverb (witness also the sentence-initial position), expressing the speaker’s strong conviction of what follows:

- (6) a. STRATOPHANES: TUM POL EGO ET DONIS PRIUATUS SUM ET PERII.
 PHRONESIUM: **PLANE** ISTUC EST.
 (Plautus, *Truculentus*, 617–618)
 ‘Stratophanes: Then I’ve been deprived of gifts and I’m utterly ruined.
 Phronesium: That’s obvious/exactly so’.
- b. **PLANE** SI FILIAM HABEREM, AURICULAS ILLI PRAECIDEREM. (Petronius 67,10; adapted from Rosén 2009: 342, ex. XIIb)
 ‘Surely if I had a daughter, I would cut her ears off’.

In Late Latin, *PLĀNĒ* is also reported as a connective particle expressing contrast (Rosén 2009: 356) and as a modal particle with a complying/conceding function (Rosén 2009: 359). Although no examples are provided (and I myself have not been able to identify any), which increases the speculative nature of what follows, it is plausible to imagine that it may have originated in an inference from its use as a strong affirmation to be interpreted with a broader function of foregrounding, hence suitable to express contrast. This is explored in Section 14.6.

It is interesting to note that both *BĒNĒ* and *PLĀNĒ* were positive evaluative adverbs that could also be used as degree adverbs. This fits in with a general tendency for expressions of quality to be reanalysed as expressions of quantity via metonymy, as described above. We can therefore assume a shared cline of diachronic development along the lines given in (7):

- (7) Manner adverb (positive evaluation) > (completeness) > degree adverb (high intensity) > attitudinal sentential adverb [> modal particle].⁴

At the same time, we also notice the reported further developments of *PLĀNĒ* as a particle expressing contrast and concession.

We return to the significance of this cline and its role in assessing the potential existence of a semantic-pragmatic cycle in [Section 14.6](#). Let us now turn to the development of these two adverbs in Occitan.

14.3 Occitan *be*(*n*)

In Old Occitan (8th to 15th century), two reflexes of Latin *BĒNĒ* were attested, *ben* and *be*. In the texts that make up the corpus on which this study is based,⁵ the earliest attestations are of *ben*, occurring from the 11th century, while *be* first appears in the 12th century. [Anglade \(1921: 184–185\)](#) remarks that intervocalic ‘*n*’ in Latin (as in *BĒNĒ*) had become word final after the loss of the final vowel and was unstable in proto-Romance in the majority of words, particularly when the adverb preceded a word beginning in *s*, *f*, *v*, *m*. This would suggest that the alternation of *ben* and *be* was phonologically motivated. Phonology, perhaps, played a part in the earlier period: as the data show, in its first attestations in the 12th century *be* appears exclusively with an enclitic pronoun, suggesting a link between enclisis of a pronoun and *be*. However, from the onset there are indications that hint at a deeper distinction between the two forms, in terms of both their semantic properties (*be* tends not to function as a manner adverb but seems to encode information typical of attitudinal sentential adverbs) and their syntactic properties (*be* occurs predominantly at the periphery of sentences).

⁴ This term, ‘modal particle’, is chosen over similar others (e.g. discourse marker, pragmatic particle, etc.) because it includes ‘modality’, an expression of the speaker’s modal stance; that is, their subjectivity. It is not meant to be understood as a choice based on the widely accepted opposition between the German-type modal particles that generally have fixed scope and syntactic position, and discourse markers, characterized by variable scope and syntactic position.

⁵ This is a self-compiled corpus of selected texts originating from the broad Languedocian area, written between the 11th and 19th centuries, and totalling over 500,000 words. For the earlier period (11th to 15th centuries), they include a mixture of mystery plays and *chansons de geste*, and, although in verse, they have the advantage of being of a more discursive and narrative register than the troubadour’s poetry. For the later period (16th to 19th centuries), they are exclusively plays. Overall, all the texts have a high degree of dialogue, which can be taken to be as representative of the spoken language of the time as can reasonably be expected. This is a summary of the texts included in the corpus (with the acronyms used in the examples and the length in lines) used in this study: 11th century, *La Canso de Sancta Fides* (CSF), 593; 12th century, *Roman de Jaufré* (JAU), 10,974; 13th century, *Canso de la Crotzada* (CCA), 9,578; and *Flamenca* (FLA), 8,094; 14th century, *Guilhem de la Barra* (GDB), 5,344; 15th century, *Lo Jutgamen General* (JDE), 2,730; *Mystère rouergat de l’Ascension* (MDA), 1,047; *Mystère rouergat de la Passion* (MDP2), 4,516; and *Istoria Petri et Pauli* (PEP), 6,104; 16th century, *Le billet de logement* (BDL), 364; 17th century, *Theatre de Beziers* (TDB), approx. 9,540; 18th century, *Lo Tresaur de Substancion* (TDS), approx. 2,310; 19th century, *Lou pan dou pecat* (PDP), approx. 2,145.

Before we look more in detail at the distribution of *ben* and *be* across the centuries, it is useful to have an overview of the trend in their frequency in the older period (i.e. 11th to 15th centuries). Presenting the overall frequencies of the two adverbs (expressed as a ratio of raw number of occurrences over length of text (in number of lines)) for each century, Figure 14.1 offers an indication of the trend in their distribution. While *ben* is significantly more frequent than *be* between the 11th and 13th centuries, in the 14th century we see a shift, and in the 15th century the use of *ben* declines and *be* takes over. This does not continue in the later period, as discussed in Section 14.3.2, in which *be* almost disappears and with it, the specific modal-particle-like usage that it expresses in the 15th century.

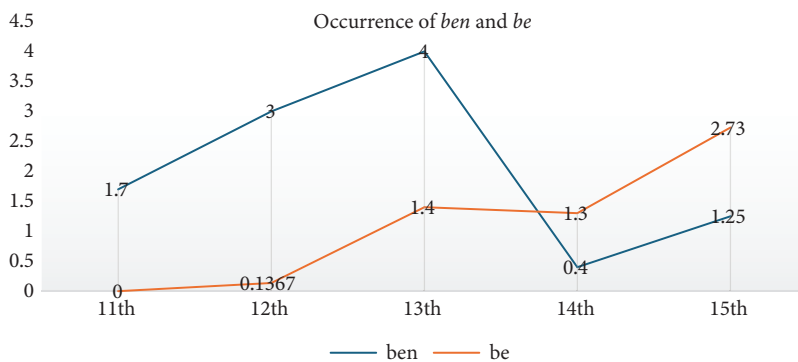


Figure 14.1 Frequency of *ben* and *be*

14.3.1 Earlier period: 11th to 15th centuries

14.3.1.1 11th to 13th centuries

In the 11th century, only *ben* is found: it functions as a manner adverb (8a) and as an intensifier with adjectives (8b):

- (8) a. *Qui **ben** la diz a lei Francesca* (CSF 20)
 ‘Who says it well in the French way’.
- b. *q’aqell a **ben** prod et agud;* (CSF 184)
 ‘Since she is very brave and prudent’.

Be makes its first appearance in the twelfth century: it is found *exclusively* with an enclitic pronoun, and functions as an attitudinal sentential adverb (cf. Vendler’s ‘illocutionary’ adverb (1984: 303) or Cinque’s ‘speech act’ adverb (1999: 12)):

- (9) a. *Be-m poira tener per aurat* (JAU 1232)
 ‘Rightly/Indeed me he could consider insane’
- b. *Ez ieu voill mais receber mort/en outra terra, be-us o dic* (JAU 8052–3)
 ‘And I would rather receive death/in another land, in truth/indeed I tell you’.

The manner adverb function is only available to *ben*. With verbs of cognition, *ben*, too, can take on an attitudinal sentential adverbial use ((10a) and (10b)):

- (10) a. *Ez es s'en ab aitant intrada/ E fes castiar sa mainada/ Que non faisons bruida ni nausa,/ E que laison dormir en pausa/ Jaufre, si com pro cavallier,/ Que ben cre que l'aia mestier.* (JAU 7375–7380)
 ‘And she went into her chamber/ and admonished her servants/ not to make chatter nor noise,/ and that they let sleep a bit/ Jaufre, although an excellent knight,/she truly believed that he needed it’.
- b. *E dis a Jaufre tot süau:/ “Seiner, ben sabetz escarnir,/ E gent parlar e plazer dir”* (JAU 7868–7870)
 ‘And she replied to Jaufre most softly:/ “My Lord, you really know how to mock,/ and speak courteously and say pleasant things”’.

In the 13th century, we see that both *be* and *ben* can function as attitudinal sentential adverbs. The distribution of *be*, however, is determined by the presence (or lack of it) of an enclitic pronoun, as shown in (11a) (cf., however, (11b), in which *ben* is followed by a dative clitic). *Ben* can also be a degree adverb modifying a past participle used adjectivally (11c)):

- (11) a. “*Sener, ben aug e be-us enten*” (FLA 1182)
 “‘My Lord, well I hear and well I understand you’”.
- b. “*Ben l’ò dirai e be-i sera*” (FLA 6954)
 “‘For sure I’ll tell him and for sure he’ll be here’”.
- c. *Una capa de negra saia/ Ben feita vest* (FLA 2220–2221)
 ‘He puts on a cloak of black woollen cloth, well made’.

With verbs of cognition, both *ben* and *be* are found, although it is mainly *be*; they can either have a manner reading or an attitudinal sentential adverb reading:

- (12) a. *be sabon que la mortz lor es aparelhea* (CCA 17 029)
 ‘For they knew well /They truly knew that death awaited them’.

- b. *Avan que de Nemur[s] issis/ Mi cuh eu **be** que la sentis*; (FLA 1077–1078)
 ‘Before he left Namur,/ it seemed to me for sure that he had tasted her’.
- c. *Na Girauda fo preza que crida e plora e brai,/ en un potz la giteron a
 travers, **ben** o sai*; (CCA 71 011–2)
 ‘Lady Girauda was taken, and she shrieked and cried and shouted,/
 they threw her across into a well, I truly know this/ I know this
 well’.

14.3.1.2 A noticeable change: 14th and 15th centuries

In the 14th century, *be* overtakes *ben* in frequency (69 and 22 occurrences respectively). *Be* is still used with enclitics ((13a) and (13b)), both are used as manner adverbs ((13c); *be* also co-occurs with intensifiers, (13d)), and both can modify a participle used adjectivally (13e):

- (13) a. *Pueyss enapres, que **be-m** sove* (GDB 4016)
 ‘Then after, I remembered well/indeed’.
- b. *si fos qui **be-l** saubes menar* (GDB 4031)
 ‘If it were him who you know well how to chase away’.
- c. *Comjat van pendre **ben** e gent* (GDB 108)
 ‘(With) permission they go and take (them) carefully and gently’.
- d. *amdos s’endevengron trop **be*** (GDB 2371)
 ‘Both made a very good agreement’.
- e. ***ben** adobat e **be** prendent* (GDB 2477)
 ‘Well adorned and a real expert’.

With verbs of cognition, however, only *be* is found, and both manner adverb and attitudinal sentential adverb readings are available:

- (14) a. *gardatz vos **be** que no parletz* (GDB 3664)
 ‘Be very careful (lit. watch yourself well) not to talk (about this)’.
- b. *mas **be** say ques anc no-y fon us* (GDB 3860)
 ‘But I know well/truly that there were none’ (i.e. guests who did not
 leave rich)

It is in the 15th century that *be* truly takes over and becomes significantly more frequent than *ben*, although *ben* is still the adverb of choice for the expression of the manner adverb function (except for a single occurrence in JDE, cf. (15c)):

- (15) a. *quar el ho fara mot **ben***. (MDP2 1016)
 ‘Since he will do it very well.’
- b. *Notari, ieu fariey **ben** mon mestier* (MDP2 4479)
 ‘Notary, I would do my job well.’
- c. *he te porvesiriey mot **be*** (JDE 2074)
 ‘And I will provide for you very well’. (i.e. amply, with plenty of food)

In terms of the intensifier function, this is mainly expressed by *ben* and only very marginally by *be*:

- (16) a. *Aquest amava **ben** fort* (MDP2 2208)
 ‘He loved this one intensely’.
- b. *Areguardatz lo **be** fermamen* (MDP2 4887)
 ‘Look at him very carefully’.

With verbs of cognition, there is a mixed picture, and we find some variation depending on the text. In JDE we essentially only find *be* (there is one instance of *ben*, cf. (17b)), in MDA we only find *ben* (17c), and in MDP2 we find both ((17d) and (17e)):

- (17) a. *He, mayre, vos sabetz **be*** (JDE 1210)
 ‘Mother, you know well/indeed’.
- b. *He sabetz **ben**, senhor/, Que Misericordia es tot jorn perpetuala;*
 (JDE 1029–30)
 ‘You know well/ You truly know, Lord,/ that Mercy is eternal and forever’.
- c. *que aquesta gen ago tant **ben** saubut* (MDA 808)
 ‘That these people had indeed known’.
- d. *Tot aiso me hemagena **ben** ieu* (MDP2 4044)
 ‘All (things) like this I indeed imagine myself’.
- e. *Nos sertas **be** conoysem* (MDP2 5722)
 ‘We certainly know well’.

Across the three texts, *be* very frequently co-occurs with attitudinal sentential adverbs such as *veramen* ‘truly’ and *sertas, de sertas, sertanamen* ‘for sure, surely’. The verbs are all verbs of saying and verbs of cognition.

The overall tendencies for this earlier period can be summarized as follows:

(18) <i>Ben</i>: • manner and degree adverb throughout • extends into attitudinal sentential adverb with verbs of cognition	<i>Be</i>: • initially co-occurs with enclitics • attitudinal sentential adverb • occurs readily with verbs of cognition • not available for the manner adverb reading

In the 15th century, a new use emerges, and it is exclusively restricted to *be*: occurring in negative polar questions, *be* displays a modal-particle-like behaviour. In the example in (19), *be* cannot possibly be interpreted as either manner adverb, intensifier, or attitudinal sentential adverb. The context makes it clear that it is used to express a strong affirmation by the speaker, and it opposes a strong counterexpectation on the part of the hearer:

- (19) *Per que davant lo jutge tu me acusas?/ He las! no sabes **be** tu que ton mal conselh,/ Ton fastich he ton erguelh/ De Paradis te an fach tonbar?* (JDE 194–197)

‘Why do you accuse me in front of the Judge?/ Alas! Don’t you **BE** know that it was your perverse inspiration,/ your presumption and your pride/ that made you fall from Heaven?’

(19), extracted from a scene of *Lo Jutgamen General* ‘Judgement Day’, is uttered by Saint Michael as a response to Lucifer (JDE 106–147) who proclaims his innocence of all the sins that have been attributed to him. The response, ‘*He las! no sabes **be** tu que ton mal conselh,/ Ton fastich he ton erguelh/ De Paradis te an fach tonbar?*’, is a strong assertion that puts forward a view of what happened that starkly contrasts with Lucifer’s declaration, also witness the preposing to a focalized position of the phrases expressing the real reasons (i.e. *ton mal conselh, ton fastich he ton erguelh*). It could be translated as ‘Alas! You know full well ...’

This question very closely resembles instances of modern French *bien* occurring in polar questions, which have been analysed by Hansen (1998b) and Waltereit and Detges (2007) as a modal-particle use of *bien*:

- (20) *Vous avez **bien** reçu mon message?*

‘You *did* receive my message, didn’t you?’ (Waltereit and Detges 2007: 63, ex. 4)

As a modal particle used in polar questions, French *bien* has a positive bias: it strongly affirms the speaker's belief in the truth of the proposition over which it takes scope, in this case that the hearer received the speaker's message, and at the same time it signals that the speaker is aware of the opposite belief being held by their hearer (cf. Hansen 1998b: 114). As a modal particle, French *bien* is polyphonous and it acts at the speech-act level (expressing a strong affirmation in contexts with a strong counterexpectation).

Similarly to its French counterpart, *be* also expresses strong affirmation where a strong counterexpectation exists. In (19), the speaker is denying the hearer's denial that they are responsible for their own fall. Put schematically,

- (20) Hearer (X)'s belief: $\neg A$
 Speaker (Y)'s utterance: $\neg (\neg A)$

where *A* stands for the proposition 'X is responsible'.

Although no strong generalizations can be drawn from so few examples, it is worth mentioning that in all these instances, *be* co-occurs with verbs of cognition, which were discussed above (Section 14.2) as offering an opportunity for semantic expansion. Furthermore, all the instances of *be* as an affirmative particle occur in dialogic exchanges, contexts in which more than one point of view is present and entertained by the participants. This facilitates the development of polyphonous elements, that is, linguistic items that are able to encode an 'awareness' of multiple voices/points of view (cf. Ducrot 1984). The properties displayed by *be* strongly point to its modal-particle nature along the properties laid out by Waltereit and Detges (2007: 63).

Let us now summarize the development, so far, of Occitan *ben* and *be*. Following Hansen's (1998b: 128) proposal for French *bien*, I assume that the basic use of (proto-)Occitan *ben* was the manner adverb, from which, via metonymy, the use as a degree adverb was derived.⁶ Just like the development of *BĒNĒ* discussed in Section 14.2.1, this new extension of the meaning was compatible with the modification of scalar adjectives. In its extension of usage to modify verbs, verbs of cognition offered an opening for a shift towards expressing a strong affirmation. This allowed a further extension to an attitudinal sentential adverb with scope over the whole sentence. The final step of this development, into an affirmative modal particle, only applied to *be*. Affirming a state of affairs which is either explicitly or implicitly denied, requires something stronger than a simple declarative clause. The speaker needs to affirm that *A* does not only hold, but 'it holds WELL' (Waltereit and Detges 2007: 75), or 'INDEED it holds'. It was in dialogic exchanges, I claim, that the conventionalization of this affirmative use of *be* came about

⁶ It is entirely plausible that, in fact, the degree adverb reading was simply inherited from its Latin usage. Either way, the metonymic nature of the expansion of meaning does not change.

(cf. [Waltereit and Detges 2007](#) for French *bien*).⁷ Such a trajectory is well attested: Traugott and Dasher (2002: 40) comment on the same directionality typically involved in the shift from ‘meanings that function at the propositional level (e.g., manner adverbials in event structures), to meanings with scope over the proposition (e.g., sentential adverbials), to meanings with scope over the discourse unit (e.g., adverbials in discourse marker function)’.

[Figure 14.2](#) summarizes the developmental path followed by *ben/be*.

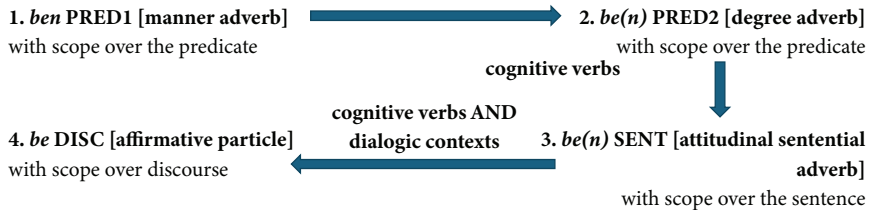


Figure 14.2 Development of Occitan *ben/be*, 11th to 15th centuries

14.3.2 Later period: 16th to 19th centuries

The relative linearity of the path followed by *ben* and *be* in the earlier period is not reflected in what we see in the later period. This is possibly due to the choice of texts, which for the later period originate from a broader area (unlike those from the earlier period, which are mainly from what Alibert classifies as the Southern and Northern dialects ([Alibert 1935/1976](#))).

In the 16th century there are no instances of *be*. *Ben* is used as a degree adverb, alongside *tant* (21a), as an attitudinal sentential adverb (21b), and, only marginally, as a manner adverb (21c):

- (21) a. *Que petto coumo un roussin/ Et veissino coum'un poullin / Qu'à sa perssouno tant rougnouso/ Emay, certos, ben mourvellouzo* (BDL 125–128)

‘Who breaks wind like an old horse/ and suckles like a colt,/ who has a very mangy face/ even, for sure, very snotty’.

- b. *Aquo, certos, faray ben you,/ Car vous vezes que syou bon home* (BDL 153–154)

‘This, for sure, I will do well/ indeed,/ because you can see that I am an honest man’.

⁷ Cf. [Paoli \(2020\)](#) for an account of how dialogic contexts have favoured the establishment of *pas* as the unrivalled postverbal sentential negator in Occitan.

- c. *Tantost parlavyan de la guerro,/ N'y a que dizien qu'ero per terro,/ May la tournon **ben** revelha* (BDL 145–148)

'Just now we were talking about the war,/ there were some who said she was completely dejected,/ but they revive her nicely.'

In the 17th century we find both *ben* and *be/bé*: both can be used as attitudinal sentential adverbs and as degree adverbs and *be* occurs in contexts where it may be interpreted as an affirmative modal particle (22a). Neither is found as a manner adverb: this is significant, since, as shown in the [next section](#), this is when *pla(n)* begins to appear with this meaning.

- (22) a. *LE PAYSANT. Yeu saui **be** legi, mays ma viste es debile* (TDB)

'I DO know how to read, but my sight is weak' (possibly a modal particle, 'I can in fact read, in spite of what you think')

- b. *Tout so que vol es **ben** voulgut* (TDB)

'All you wish for is very appreciated.'

In the 18th and 19th centuries, once again only *ben* is found, mainly in collocation with verbs of cognition, functioning as an attitudinal sentential adverb and as a degree adverb, and in collocation with *oc* 'yes' to reinforce a positive answer to a question (23):

- (23) *Pascau: Setz-ti ben segur de vòstre fèct?*

*Nicou: Oc-**ben** sai que!* (TDS)

'Pascau: Are you quite sure about your facts?

Nicou: Absolutely yes I know (i.e. I know without a doubt).'

No unambiguous uses of *ben* as a manner adverb are found, although with cognitive verbs there would naturally be a possibility for it to be read as such alongside its degree-adverb reading.

Let us now turn to the development of *pla(n)*.

14.4 Occitan *pla(n)*

Similarly to the situation in Latin, *pla(n)* is less frequent than *be(n)* in the Occitan texts that make up the corpus, and consequently there are considerably fewer examples across the centuries. This is compounded by the added complexity of the degree of overlap between the epicentre of the area in which *pla(n)* seems to be used historically (mainly seen in Gascon) and the diatopic distribution of the texts in the corpus. From the early 17th century, the use of Gascon in writing is

restricted mainly to the Béarn region (Bec 1986: 93), an area that is not covered by the texts. For this reason, the discussion of *pla(n)* in the later period relies mainly on secondary sources.

14.4.1 Earlier period: 11th to 15th centuries

In the earlier period, we see a rather fluid situation, in which there are a number of forms (i.e. *plan*, *de plan*, *pla*, *plannamens*, and *planamentz*) with a number of meanings, ranging from a manner adverb meaning ‘calmly, slowly, gently’ ((24a), 12th century; (24b), 14th century; (24c), 15th century), to a manner adverb meaning ‘plainly, simply’ ((24d), 13th century), to an attitudinal sentential adverb ((24e), 13th century), to a modifier of expressions of time and place ((24f) and (24g), 13th century). The most frequent usage is as a manner adverb meaning ‘calmly, gently, slowly’ and ‘simply, plainly’:

- (24) a. *Pueis a-l ditz tot suau e plan* (IAU 9178)
‘Then he said to him, very softly and calmly’
- b. *Ayssi cavalguan bel e pla* (GDB 5152)
‘They rode this way, nice and gently’
- c. *Parthemius: Menen-lo plan, lo bon guarson, / Ou aultroment el ploraré* (PEP 4434–5)
‘Parthemius: “Take him there gently/slowly, the good boy, / otherwise he will cry”’
- d. *E lo coms de Montfort fe que cortes e bar/ a la gent de la terra lo fe el pla mostrar* (CCA 40 019–20)
‘The count of Montfort behaved like a man of honour/ and to the people of the land, he showed his body plainly’
- e. *Que ben vos dic en ver de plan*, (IAU 3699)
‘I tell you truly and certainly’
- f. *al mati, pla a l'alba* (CCA 106 004)
‘In the morning at first light’
- g. *pla desobre las rengas* (CCA 211 134)
‘Right above the straps’

14.4.2 Later period: 16th to 19th centuries

It is not until the late 17th to early 18th century that examples of *pla(n)* meaning ‘well’ start to appear: this is in concomitance with *be(n)*’s manner adverb function

decreasing sharply in the eighteenth century. As well as a manner adverb (25a), *pla(n)* also functions as a degree adverb (25b), and also continues to mean ‘slowly’ (25c):

- (25) a. *Se voly que tout ane **pla*** (TDB)
 ‘If I want that everything goes well.’
 b. *que ne souy **pla** iouyous* (TDB)
 ‘That I’m very happy about it.’
 c. *Anén **plan*** (TDB)
 ‘Let’s go slowly.’

The 19th-century texts are plays originating mainly from the Provençal area, the Eastern area in which reflexes of Latin *PLĀNĒ* are only maintained as adverbs meaning ‘slowly’ in the current varieties (26), especially in the reduplicated form *plan plan* (cf. [Fettuciari et al. 2003](#)). We return to the significance of this in [Section 14.6](#).

- (26) *Entre que ié siéu plus, rèn se fai, tout vai **plan*** (PDP)
 ‘If I’m not here, nothing gets done, everything goes slowly.’

14.5 *Be(n)* and *pla(n)*: 20th to 21st centuries

In modern Occitan, *be(n)* and *pla(n)* continue to coexist. An overview of their distribution at the beginning of the 20th century is afforded by the *Atlas Linguistique de la France* (ALF, map 131), in which the two can be seen sharing the semantic and pragmatic space between the manner adverb ‘well’, the manner adverb ‘thoroughly’, the attitudinal sentential adverb ‘indeed, truly’, and a possible modal-particle-like usage. Also from the beginning of the 20th century, a record of *be(n)* and *pla(n)* in collocation with *o(c)* ‘yes’ to reinforce a positive answer to a question, ‘absolutely’ ([Ronjat 1913](#): 229), a usage that still exists today (cf. [Fossat 2006](#): 161: *òc ben*, *òc plan* ‘absolutely, of course yes’). Following from this affirmative particle usage, *be* is, not surprisingly, never found in negative clauses ([Suïls Subirà and Ribes 2015](#): 559).

Research from the 21st century has classified a reduced form of *ben*, *b(é)*, among the so-called enunciative particles in Gascon,⁸ a set of adverb-derived particles that, pragmatically, act on the illocutionary level (and express the speaker’s subjective attitude towards the propositional content put forward in

⁸ The term *énonciatif* was first introduced by [Ronjat \(1913: 79\)](#) and applied to *que*, *e*, *ja*, and *o* to indicate their function to ‘renforcer une énonciation’ ([Ronjat 1913: 82](#)); that is, to reinforce a statement by modifying the illocutionary force of a sentence.

their sentence;⁹ cf. Fossat 2006), and, syntactically, tend to occur at the clausal peripheries. In line with its strengthening of a positive response, in declarative, root clauses, *b(e)* reinforces the affirmation, highlighting ‘the assertive strength of the proposition put forward’ (Pusch 2002: 111) and denoting an ‘explicit commitment by the speaker’ (Suïls Subirà and Ribes 2015: 560):

- (27) *b’ei aquò* (from Pusch 2002, 111)

‘Indeed/Exactly, that’s it’

Be is also used in exclamative clauses, in which it both marks the sentence as an exclamation (witness the ungrammaticality of (28b’), from Morin 2008: 140) and can strengthen the assertion ((28a), from Fossat 2006: 162):

- (28) a. *B’a nevat tota la nuèit!*

‘It has really snowed all night / Indeed it has snowed all night!’

- b. *Maria be canta plan!*

- b’. **Maria canta plan!*

‘How well Mary sings!’

Furthermore, it can also be used in yes/no interrogatives that are not seeking information but confirmation (28c):

- (28) c. *Be soparàs dab nosauts?* (Romieu and Bianchi 2005: 133)

‘You are dining with us, right?’

In (28c) the speaker is checking on previously made plans that perhaps had not been overtly acknowledged by both parties, but the sentence does not seem to be a reaction to an implicit denial of that state of affairs. It is, however, possible to obtain a modal-particle-like reading along the lines of what was found in the 15th century (cf. Section 14.3.1). In the following example, from Camelat (1914/2000: 77), reported in Suïls Subirà and Ribes (2015: 568), while the first *be* is an attitudinal sentential adverb, strongly asserting the truth of having just seen the lady, the second is polyphonic, and results from the contrast between the actual situation (i.e.

⁹ This is not, however, a universally accepted idea (cf. already Rohlf 1935/1977: 205; more recently, Pusch 2000, 2002): Pusch (2002: 112) rejects the notion that *be* (and *ja*) may be enunciative particles because of their relative syntactic mobility, and their ‘adverbial nature’. He concedes, however, that they are particles expressing the speaker’s attitude and the assertive strength of their proposition, which makes them incompatible with other enunciative particles. This is not the place to engage in a discussion on the specific classification of *be*: what is relevant here is its ability to express the speaker’s subjective attitude towards a given state of affairs.

the lady is hiding and seems not to want to see Gaston Febus) and what previous events (i.e. the lady's words that she would be seeing Gaston Febus the following day) have led the character to believe:

- (29) *Ò blanga Dauna, dauna aimada, ont t'escones?*
Be t'èi vista, com de la frinèsta espiavi,
per adès! Ont ès donc partida (...)?
bé'm digós: a doman! E dongas, non truca aqueth doman tà nos?
 'Oh White Lady, beloved lady, where are you hiding?
 I have surely seen you, as I looked from the window,
 A moment ago! Where have you gone, then?
 And yet you *did* say to me "till tomorrow!" And so, isn't that tomorrow
 knocking (at the door) for us?'

This ability of *be* to express a contrast between different types of evidence available to a speaker (often represented by the opposition of facts and intentions) as in (29) leads [Suïls Subirà and Ribes \(2015: 573\)](#) to conclude that *be* may be a marker of evidentiality.

In line with this, *be* is reported in what appears to be a modal-particle-like function, making a strong affirmation that seems to go against the addressee's implicit or explicit objections ([Toulzer 2023: 229](#), vol. 1), much along the lines of what is claimed by [Suïls Subirà and Ribes \(2015\)](#):

- (30) *Perqué reboutrègos? Be t'a croumpat la maisou.*
 'Why are you complaining? He *did* buy you the house.'

As for *plan*, it functions as the manner adverb 'well' (31a) and the degree adverb (31b) in the Western Occitan varieties ([Ronjat 1913: 229](#)):

- (31) a. *La mea mair que cosina plan.* (Gascon)
 'My mother cooks well.'
 b. *N'ès pas plan content deu son tribalh* (Gascon, [Romieu and Bianchi 2005: 377](#))
 'He is not very happy with his job.'

[Toulzer \(2023: 152–153, vol. 3\)](#) records the following usages for *pla* in the district of Ariège:

1. Manner adverb 'well' (32a);
2. Degree adverb 'very' (32b), as well as 'much, a lot' (32c);
3. Attitudinal sentential adverb 'certainly' (32d):

- (32) a. *Qu'à **pla** parlat.*
 'He has spoken well'.
 b. *La filha qu'èro **pla** contento.*
 'The girl was very happy'.
 c. *Que minjo **pla**.*
 'He eats a lot'.
 d. *On pot **pla** cercá l'sèou enterèt, mes sense pourtá prejudici as aoutis.*
 'One can certainly seek their interest, but without harming others'.

In addition, *pla* is also reported as a sentence-initial particle expressing the speaker's regret at the state of affairs asserted by their proposition:

- (32) e. ***Pla** nou màc diguères.*
 'Pity you did not tell me about it'.

Finally, in Gascon *pla(n)* can also be used as a negative response to a yes/no interrogative:

- (32) f. A: *Es gouarit?*
 B: *Oh! **Plan*** (Foix 2003: 524)
 'A: Is he better? (lit. Is he cured?)
 B: Well, no'.

Map 131 of the ALF offers an overview of the diatopic distribution of *be(n)* and *pla(n)* at the beginning of the 20th century, which can be interpreted as the synchronic reflection of the diachronic gradual change that the two elements have been undergoing.

The relevant stimulus sentences are *bien* as a manner adverb meaning 'well' (i.e. *Il faut savoir bien nager pour passer outre quand elle est gonflée* 'You need to know how to swim well to get past it when it is swollen'), as a manner adverb in collocation with a verb of cognition meaning 'well, thoroughly' (i.e. *Nous connaissons bien le chemin* 'We know the way well/thoroughly'), as an attitudinal sentential adverb meaning 'certainly, for sure' (i.e. *Si c'était bien cuit, j'en mangerais bien* 'If it is well cooked, I will certainly have some'), and as a possible affirmative modal particle (i.e. *Nous savions bien que vous veniez* 'We DO know that you came [in spite of the fact that you are claiming you did not]').

14.6 Discussion

Observing the unfolding of the developments from Latin *BĒNĒ* and *PLĀNĒ* through to Old and Modern Occitan *be(n)* and *pla(n)*, a similar trajectory is recognizable:

from manner adverb to sentential adverbs to modal particle. As mentioned at the end of [Section 14.3.1.2](#), Traugott and Dasher (2002: 40) comment on the same directionality typically involved in the shift from ‘meanings that function at the propositional level (e.g., manner adverbials in event structures), to meanings with scope over the proposition (e.g., sentential adverbials), to meanings with scope over the discourse unit (e.g., adverbials in discourse marker function)’. These sequential shifts are part of a cline; that is, a recognized tendency for items with the same (or similar) source meanings to develop similar meanings and pragmatic functions, hence following a recognizable developmental path.

The Occitan data show that both *be(n)* and *pla(n)* are on the same path, with *be(n)* preceding, in diachronic terms, *pla(n)*: of particular relevance is the timing of concomitance of *be(n)* losing its ability to function as the manner adverb ‘well’ and *pla(n)* acquiring it, which happens around the 17th and 18th centuries.

The consequence of that shift is reflected, synchronically, in the diatopic distribution of *be(n)* and *pla(n)* in the Southern regions of France where the two coexist. If the stimulus sentences that create map 131 in the ALF are arranged along a line of increasing levels of grammaticalization/pragmaticalization, that is, each element is less grammaticalized/pragmaticalized than the one to its right, as shown in (33), a revealing picture appears.

- (33) 1. manner adverb ‘well’ > 2. degree adverb ‘thoroughly’ > 3. attitudinal
sentential adverb ‘certainly, for sure’ > 4. modal-particle-like usage.

As we move from the South-West, where all of these are realized by *pla(n)/plo*, towards the South-East, we see a gradual shift from *pla(n)* to *be(n)*. The shift follows the cline in (33) from left to right, with the following results:

(34) a.	1. <i>pla(n)</i> > 2. <i>pla(n)</i> > 3. <i>pla(n)</i> > 4. <i>pla(n)</i>	West
b.	1. <i>pla(n)</i> > 2. <i>pla(n)</i> > 3. <i>pla(n)</i> > 4. <i>be(n)</i>	
c.	1. <i>pla(n)</i> > 2. <i>pla(n)</i> > 3. <i>be(n)</i> > 4. <i>be(n)</i>	
d.	1. <i>pla(n)</i> > 2. <i>be(n)</i> > 3. <i>be(n)</i> > 4. <i>be(n)</i>	↓
e.	1. <i>be(n)</i> > 2. <i>be(n)</i> > 3. <i>be(n)</i> > 4. <i>be(n)</i>	East

The area in which this cline is witnessed loosely corresponds to the administrative region of Occitania, including the Departments, from West to East, of Lot-et-Garonne, Gers, Hautes-Pyrénées, Hautes-Garonne, Tarn-et-Garonne, Lot, Cantal, Aveyron, Tarn, Ariège, Aude, Pyrénées-Orientales, Hérault, Lozère, Gard and Bouches-du-Rhône. Plotting these five stages on a map provides the picture in [Figure 14.3](#).

The locations that represent the different stages of the cline are coded as follows in [Figure 14.3](#):

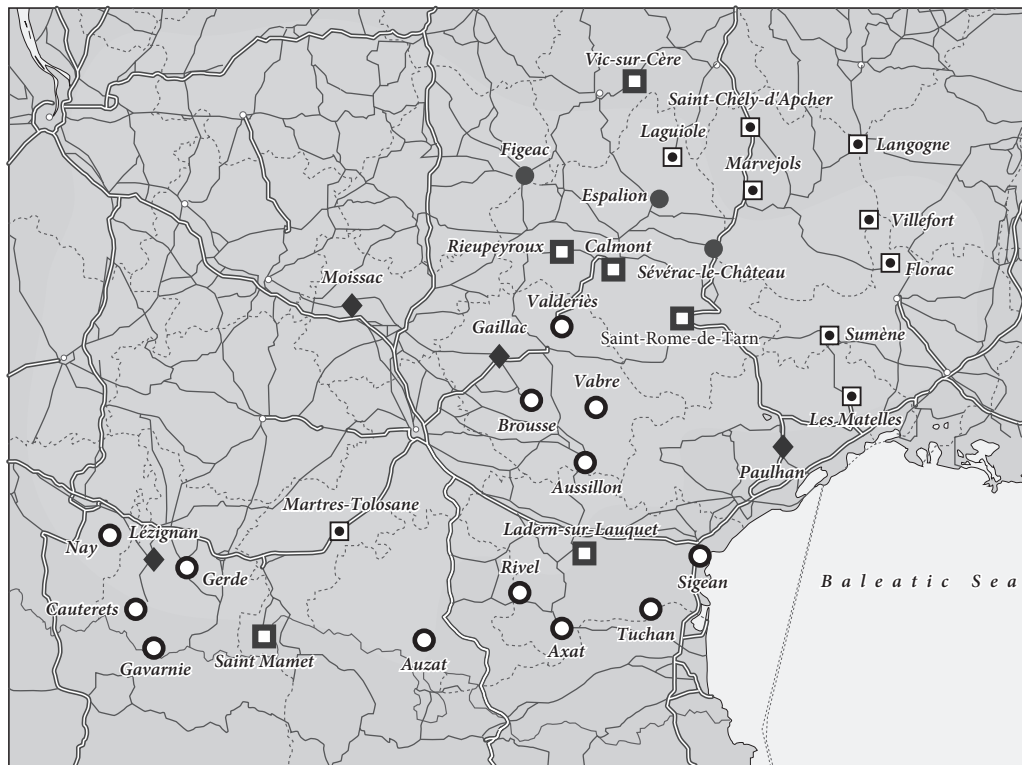


Figure 14.3 Distribution of the $pla(n)-be(n)$ cline

- Stage a: 1. *pla*(*n*) > 2. *pla*(*n*) > 3. *pla*(*n*) > 4. *pla*(*n*)—○
- Stage b: 1. *pla*(*n*) > 2. *pla*(*n*) > 3. *pla*(*n*) > 4. *be*(*n*)—◆
- Stage c: 1. *pla*(*n*) > 2. *pla*(*n*) > 3. *be*(*n*) > 4. *be*(*n*)—◻
- Stage d: 1. *pla*(*n*) > 2. *be*(*n*) > 3. *be*(*n*) > 4. *be*(*n*)—●
- Stage e: 1. *be*(*n*) > 2. *be*(*n*) > 3. *be*(*n*) > 4. *be*(*n*)—◻

In some Western Gascon varieties, a reflex of Latin *BĒNĒ* is replacing *pla*(*n*) as a manner and a degree adverb. Palay (1936: 149, vol. 1) reports the use of *bién*, perceived as a ‘gallicism’, nevertheless commonly used instead of *pla*(*n*):

(35) a. *Qu’arribarà bién.*

‘He will arrive well (i.e. he will get there alright)’

b. *Qu’èy bién aparentat.*

‘He/it is very similar’

In these varieties, represented, for example, by point 722 on map 131 in the ALF (Promilhanes, in the Lot Department), we see three forms at different stages on the cline, with *be* leading the procession, *plo* following, and *bién* newly coming on the scene:

(36) 1. *bién* > 2. *plo* > 3. *plo* > 4. *be*

There is little doubt that what is being observed here is a cline of semantic-pragmatic change embarked upon by lexical items with a similar source meaning: it is this source meaning, or ‘source determination’, as Bybee et al. (1994: 9) call it, that contributes to a shared path. As noted by Pons Bordería and Llopis Cardona (2020: 323), sharing the same (or similar) source meanings is a ‘precondition of which the outcome might be the development of similar functions’. There is, however, also a strong indication that this is an instance of a semantic-pragmatic cycle. At the onomasiological level, we see that the lexical items under investigation are etymologically unrelated, they have developed in the same direction, from content-level manner adverb to context-level modal particle, and as a group they embody a cyclical pattern, starting on the path at different times and renewing the meanings/functions along the path. At the semasiological level, both Latin *BĒNĒ* and Occitan *be*(*n*), and Latin *PLĀNĒ* and Occitan *pla*(*n*), undergo parallel semantic shifts, and in both languages, we see the manner adverbs that at the beginning have a content-level function develop context-level functions and become pragmatized. Differently from what is typically associated with a simple grammaticalization cline, at various points in the renewal, we see these lexical

items developing unique functions that are not showed by the others, despite the fact that they all share the same trajectory: *plānē* as a marker of contrast and a modal particle with a complying-conceding function in Late Latin; *be* as a marker of exclamatory illocution, an interrogative particle seeking confirmation, and a possible marker of evidentiality; and *pla(n)* as a sentence-initial particle communicating the speaker's regret at the state of affairs expressed in their proposition, and a negative response to a yes/no interrogative.

These individual differences are plausibly due to distinct inferences that are triggered in the context in which each lexical item is used. They point to the fact that the word 'cycle', as discussed by Hansen (e.g. 2018b: 143), is not to be interpreted in a literal sense as comprising an identical point of departure and arrival, but more as a symbolic representation of a cyclical renewal. This is also a consequence of the fact that, in spite of all the lexical items sharing a similar meaning at the beginning of the cycle, which naturally favours similar contextual inferences, each lexical element is individual in its usage and necessarily triggers unique inferences.

A semantic-pragmatic cycle could be characterized, then, as comprising two ingredients, so to speak: a core common denominator representing the shared path, followed by an individualized functional outcome, responsible for the distinctive functions that are exclusive to each element undergoing the cycle. An established path of grammaticalization (i.e. a cline), determined by semantic features of the source meaning, is shared by a sequence of etymologically unrelated but semantically similar lexical items that renew their predecessor's path, only to be renewed themselves by their follower. Crucially, though, these semantic-pragmatic cycles do not produce identical outcomes, the differences being the result of unique inferences triggered by each of them.

From this perspective, then, what differentiates a semantic-pragmatic cycle from a traditional grammaticalization cline is precisely the development of those unique functions that result from different lexical items evoking distinct inferences. As a simplification, a semantic-pragmatic onomasiological cycle could be understood in terms of the two ingredients discussed above as having a traditional grammaticalization cline as the common denominator, renewed cyclically by etymologically unrelated lexical items, and dynamized by the individual contextual inferences that each lexical item on that cline triggers.

The particular semantic-pragmatic cycle that has been investigated here is determined by the source meaning that all lexical items share as they embark on it: the path that sees a manner adverb turning into a sentential adverb and a modal-particle-like element is crosslinguistically well established (cf. Traugott and Dasher 2002). Much along the lines of Hansen's (2018b, 2020b) proposal for a cycle specific to temporal-aspectual adverbs, I'd like to propose a cycle for manner adverbs, more specifically for adverbs that express a subjective evaluation of the manner in which a state of affairs takes place (just as 'well' does). This would also suggest that the notion of 'manner adverb' may belong to the restricted set of semantic

notions that are likely to be sources of grammaticalization. If we interpret language change to be pragmatically motivated, then it makes sense that those elements that express a high degree of subjectivity should undergo change more readily. An apropos observation: in those Eastern areas of Provence in which *pla(n)* still only means ‘slowly’, the adverb has not developed any corresponding sentence- or discourse-level functions.

14.7 Conclusions

This contribution has explored the development of two lexical items in Occitan and their Latin predecessors, with a view to addressing the question of how semantic-pragmatic cycles differ from traditional grammaticalization clines. The evidence afforded by the data has been interpreted as a cycle that was renewed a number of times in Latin, Old Occitan, and modern Occitan varieties. Reflecting on the relation between a grammaticalization cline and a semantic-pragmatic cycle, it was proposed to view a cycle as comprising of two core elements: a crosslinguistically strong series of sequential steps of change (i.e. a cline), the expression of semantic properties of the source meaning of the lexical items, and a varying functional outcome, the result of the unique inferences triggered by the individual lexical items. The established crosslinguistic validity of the path leading from manner adverb to sentential adverb to modal particle also supported the proposal of the existence of a ‘manner adverb’ cycle, along the lines of the temporal-aspectual cycle suggested by Hansen (2018b, 2020b). The element of subjective evaluation expressed by adverbs such as ‘well’ is crucial for the development of context-level functions that reflect an increased degree of subjectivity as the element progresses along the cycle.

Further crosslinguistic studies are, needless to say, necessary to test the existence of such a semantic-pragmatic cycle; the particular cases investigated in this contribution, however, make such a hypothesis highly plausible.

The role of reanalysis in the renewal of contrast

A cyclical evolution from simultaneity to opposition
in Brazilian Portuguese

Luísa Ferrari

15.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I propose a diachronic analysis of an instance of onomasiological cyclicity in Brazilian Portuguese, one which renews the meaning of contrast in the language, particularly oppositional contrast.¹ I investigate the cyclic evolution of *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que*, which are originally temporal connectives that express simultaneity relations, and which have recently developed contrastive uses. Both usage patterns are parallel to contemporary temporal and contrastive meanings of English *while*.

The chapter aims to provide insights into pragmatic and cognitive factors that explain the transition from time to contrast in both trajectories—more importantly, from a specific type of temporal relation, simultaneity, to a specific type of contrast, opposition. The analysis takes into consideration the context of each individual historical development in the first place, and subsequently focuses on the cyclic evolution that emerges when looking comparatively at the two diachronic trajectories.

I argue that the onomasiological cycle formed between *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* can be accounted for, at least partially, by conceptual affinities between simultaneity and opposition that trigger cyclical reanalyses. More specifically, I will defend the idea that both meanings encompass a dimension of similarity and a dimension of difference, in different degrees of prominence, which are reversed in specific contexts.

¹ I use the terms ‘oppositive’, ‘oppositional’, and ‘opposition’ throughout the chapter to differentiate the type of contrast that is traditionally known as ‘semantic opposition’ (cf. Sweetser 1990) from other contrast relations that have been acknowledged in the literature, such as counterexpectation.

The diachronic reconstruction I propose relies on Hansen's (2021b) hearer-driven perspective on reanalysis. The author conceives reanalysis as a mechanism of change that is conceptually and empirically distinct from other mechanisms and processes of change with which it is often associated, such as grammaticalization (Hansen 2021b: 17). This definition of reanalysis provides theoretical and descriptive support for a metonymic relationship between simultaneity and opposition that, as will be argued, is central to the cyclical renewal of oppositive contrast by similar sources.

The chapter is structured in five sections, apart from this introduction. In Section 15.2 below, I outline the main assumptions underlying the view of reanalysis assumed here. Section 15.3 presents the data and the most relevant methodological decisions behind the study. In Section 15.4, I discuss the contexts involved in the diachronic evolution of *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que*. I show how similar they are in both trajectories and explore two meaning components that, based on Murphy (2003), I will propose as being shared by simultaneity and oppositive contrast. In Section 15.5, I present evidence of onomasiological cyclicity between the two markers. Finally, Section 15.6 summarizes the conclusions.

15.2 A pragmatically orientated view of reanalysis

Hansen (2021b) proposes a definition of reanalysis that aims to make it a descriptively and theoretically more useful notion, as well as to show its importance for the study of meaning change. The author claims that reanalysis is a process triggered by a discrepancy perceived by hearers between the conventional interpretation of a construction and the contribution it makes to a given utterance (2021b: 2). In line with Heine (2002), she assumes that meaning changes occur in bridging contexts, where both the original and the new meanings are available. In contrast to him, however, she argues that the innovative interpretation is not necessarily the most salient one in these contexts; rather, it is sufficient that both meanings are possible.

The way in which Hansen puts it, in making reference to a *perceived* contribution, is essential in the context of her proposal of reanalysis as a hearer-driven process. In certain contexts, hearers may perceive and attribute a new meaning to a construction even if it was not intended by the speaker. Moreover, even in cases in which the speaker does intend a novel interpretation for an established construction, the actual reanalysis only occurs if the intended new contribution is perceived by the hearer and integrated by them into their own grammar. This is a prerequisite for them to subsequently use it when taking the role of speakers.

Hansen (2021b) also claims that the innovative meaning is already metonymically contained in the original uses as a *virtual presence*. It is, however, backgrounded in relation to the established interpretation. When reanalysis takes place,

the backgrounded meaning moves into the foreground, and the original meaning comes to be backgrounded or disappears, depending on the instance of change (2021b: 9).

Reanalysis is thus, on this definition, a mechanism of change specifically associated with the metonymic transition from the standard meaning to the innovative interpretation. Seen in this light, it is concerned with changes in the meaning side of the construction, as opposed to the process known as actualization (Timberlake 1977), which refers to the implementation of the grammatical consequences of reanalysis, in case it leads to changes in the syntactic properties of the construction. As this is a subsequent process that may or may not take place and that refers to the possible grammatical counterpart of the change, Hansen argues it is conceptually and empirically independent from reanalysis.

15.3 Data and methodology

The analysis is based on 419 tokens of *enquanto (que)* and 537 tokens of *(ao) passo (que)*, which were extracted from strongly argumentative texts and texts characterized by an 'oral' nature. The choice of the types of texts was supported by two assumptions with respect to the study of instances of language change involving pragmatic extensions and, more specifically, pragmatic extensions towards new contrastive meanings.

The first assumption, which is based on [Waltereit and Detges \(2007\)](#) and [Traugott \(2010\)](#), concerns the importance of contexts with multiple viewpoints to changes that give rise to dialogic expressions (such as contrast markers). [Waltereit and Detges \(2007\)](#) show that processes of pragmaticalization and grammaticalization tend to take place in interactions that consist of argumentation grounded in one or more alternative points of view. In a similar vein, [Traugott \(2010\)](#) presents evidence that texts containing a high degree of dialogicity work as triggers for the development of dialogic expressions, such as epistemic *in fact*. In accordance with [Roulet \(1984\)](#) and [Schwenter \(2000\)](#), she conceives dialogic orientation as the presence of multiple points of view, as opposed to dialogical interaction, which in turn refers to the number of speakers (more than one). On this definition, therefore, dialogicity is essentially concerned with language users targeting alternative or different conclusions to build their arguments. Assuming that argumentatively orientated texts are dialogic in essence, I selected a total of 38 Brazilian Portuguese strongly argumentative texts, including dissertations, essays, discourses, treaties, editorials, and works of history. In the latter case, priority was given to historical texts in which the writers frequently state their opinions on the historical events presented, instead of only narrating them.

The second criterion used to determine the empirical nature of the corpus takes into consideration the well-established assumption that texts which are closer to

spoken language, such as plays, personal letters, and trials, are a good choice as a historical source for the study of language change, since innovations usually arise in speech first (Traugott and Dasher 2002; Hansen 2008; among others). I thus selected 89 texts that are more oral in nature, including novels, personal letters, and theatrical comedies. In the case of novels, which are not commonly associated with orality in corpus studies, I opted for a sample that consists of frequent interactions between the characters.

Both groups of texts date from the 18th century to the present day. The quantitative parameter used to compile corpora that would be as balanced as possible for each group was the number of words. Because of differences in the availability of each text type in electronic format (which I took as a priority for the selection of texts), however, the group of argumentative texts has a higher number of words, with a total of 2,209,395 words, whereas the group of texts with an oral character is formed by a total of 1,574,510 words.²

Given that *enquanto* shows at least two other variants in the history of Brazilian Portuguese, namely *em quanto* and *emquanto* (both also forming periphrastic constructions with *que*), and that *passo* was neither originally periphrastic (as it is now in all its contrastive contexts of use) nor preceded by *a* as a preposition, I looked for tokens of *enquanto* and its variants in three different ways (searching for ‘em quanto’, ‘emquanto’, and ‘enquanto’) and for tokens of *passo* by searching only ‘passo’, since the result of this search would also include occurrences of *ao passo que* and other variants.

15.4 The transition from simultaneity to opposition

In this section, I examine the historical trajectories of *enquanto* (*que*) and *ao passo que* with a view to explaining the motivations (or at least some of them) underlying the transition from simultaneity to opposition, a transition which has already been acknowledged in the literature as a recurrent tendency, especially by scholars who investigate regular patterns of semantic change crosslinguistically (cf. Kortmann 1997; Traugott and Dasher 2002; Mauri and Giacalone Ramat 2012; Mauri and van der Auwera 2012).

Kortmann (1997), for instance, in bringing out networks of interclausal relations, presents evidence in favour of strong semantic affinities between a specific set of temporal relations and the conceptual domain of contrast, suggesting that the temporal value of simultaneity is particularly prone to be involved in the

² The texts were taken from three electronic databases, which provide a rich source for diachronic studies of Brazilian Portuguese: *Acervo Digital da Biblioteca Brasileira Guita e José Mindlin* (www.bbm.usp.br), *Corpus do Projeto para a História do Português Brasileiro* (<https://sites.google.com/site/corporaphpb>), and *Corpus do Projeto de História do Português Paulista* (<http://phpp.fflch.usp.br>). For reasons of space, I refer to Ferrari (2024) for the full list of texts that were selected from these databases.

emergence of new contrastive meanings. A possible explanation for this productive pattern of change, as claimed by [Mauri and van der Auwera \(2012\)](#), is that the temporal coexistence between two events can be pragmatically interpreted as surprising, in view of differences that are found to exist between them.

While this is unquestionably among the underlying motivations, I propose here to expand on the explanation by conducting an examination of the cognitive complexity of both meanings, simultaneity and opposition, which I suggest will allow for a deeper comprehension of their historical relations. To do so, I take my point of departure in the innovative contexts with *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que*, exploring the opposition conveyed by them in the light of a metalexical treatment of semantic relations, laid out in [Murphy \(2003\)](#). Subsequently I focus on the source contexts in order to examine points of convergence and divergence between them and the new uses. Finally, I conclude the section by discussing the bridging contexts that, according to the data, led to the rise of the innovative interpretation of the markers.

Although it may appear unconventional at first sight, I will take this direction of analysis because the metalexical approach to opposition adopted here is not only crucial in terms of explaining the contrastive contexts but it also contributes to elucidating the other two contexts in important ways, as will be argued. At the end of the section, I present a systematization of the stages of evolution.

15.4.1 A metalexical approach to opposition

[Murphy \(2003\)](#) proposes a metalexical approach to antonymic relations that is productive for the description of the new uses of the markers studied here. The author's framework addresses semantic relations between words, and not specifically interclausal relations, which is the level at which *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* express contrast (cf. [Section 15.4.2](#)). Yet, her approach is relevant to this study because the type of contrast expressed by the new polysemies of *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* is opposition. As a number of studies show (cf. [Lakoff 1971](#); [Mauri 2008](#); [Mauri and Giacalone Ramat 2012](#)), the words or sequences of words that are present in contrastively related clauses form the basis for the interpretation of oppositive contrast, as opposed to, for example, counterexpectation, which relies more on pragmatic inferencing rather than being determined by the semantic meaning of the lexical forms that are present in the construction ([Lakoff 1971](#); [Lang 2000](#)).

[Murphy \(2003\)](#) argues that semantic relations between words are context-dependent in nature, and, particularly in the case of antonymic relations, a 'Relation by Contrast-Lexical Contrast principle' (henceforth RC-LC) operates. She proposes that this principle belongs to the encyclopaedic knowledge that language users have about how words relate to one another, thus going beyond the knowledge that they have about specific words, which justifies the reference to

the approach as a metalexicale one. RC-LC predicts that an antonymic relation is formed when a relationship of *minimal difference* along with *maximal similarity* holds between a pair or set of words. The various similarities between contrast sets are precisely, as the author argues, what provides a background to the focus on their differences (Murphy 2003: 170).

The fact that oppositions rely on some degree of semantic similarity has long been assumed (see, for instance, Lyons 1977). Murphy (2003) also draws attention to experimental evidence that shows that speakers perceive both semantically and formally similar contrast sets as prototypical more easily than those that do not exhibit similar linguistic forms. An example is *maximize/minimize*. As the author explains, the antonym pairing formed between these verbs is judged by English speakers as a more prototypical case than a pair such as *adore/despise* because of their corresponding morphological structure (Murphy 2003: 172). Thus, although there are canonical antonym pairings whose similarity lies in the semantic level only (just like *adore/despise*), formal similarities are also a relevant feature to take into account when dealing with opposition. As discussed in Section 15.4.2, both semantic and formal similarities characterize the opposition conveyed by the markers under study.

Now, whether similarity in meaning is accompanied by similarity in form or not, what ascribes canonical status to an antonymic pair or set of words is how frequently they co-occur and are reinforced as antonyms (Murphy 2003: 178). Canonicity may of course differ between individuals and speech communities. Yet, every language has antonyms or contrast sets that are consistently recognized as fixed paradigmatic relations. As they usually refer to basic aspects of human experience, such as physical characteristics, size, age, quality, and speed, they tend to be analogous in different languages. Therefore, oppositions between words such as *big/little*, *young/old*, *good/bad*, and *fast/slow*, for instance, are crosslinguistically common (Murphy 2003: 213).

Alternatively, non-canonical antonym pairs are those that do not stand in contrast conventionally but are derived from contextually dependent conceptual associations. As proposed by Murphy's (2003) approach, any set of words can be perceived as oppositional as long as there is sufficient context for the RC-LC principle to operate and sustain a relation characterized by maximal similarity and minimal difference. Since what is similar and what is different varies by context, RC-LC can be applicable to all sorts of contexts, which demonstrates its explanatory value for both canonical and non-canonical oppositions.

An example of a non-canonical antonym pairing is the opposition between *red* and *smooth* in a question such as *Do you want red or smooth?* The canonical antonym for *smooth* in English is *rough*, in that they form an antonym pair which is not dependent on contextual knowledge. However, *red* and *smooth* can be successfully conceived as oppositional if, for instance, the question is made in a context where the interlocutors are judging the suitability of a set of five treated

canvas fabrics for a project, among which *smooth* makes reference to four fabrics (of blue, yellow, pink, and green colours, for example) that had been treated with a waterproofing agent, which gave them a smoother texture, whereas *red* is used to refer to the only fabric that remained coarse.

Context makes it possible to identify a single relevant difference between the two groups of fabrics, namely their texture. It also enables the recognition of important similarities. In the first place, the two groups of fabrics are being considered for the same project. In addition, they are all made of a canvas material, and what is in question is exactly which texture to choose for the project, which means that, in that specific context, red and smooth things are being related in complementary distribution within the frame of the same *parameter* (Murphy 2003: 174).

A parameter, or *comparator*, is a basic feature of contrastive meanings in general. As is well established in the linguistic literature (cf. Schwenter 1999; Lang 2000; Mauri 2008, to name only a few), I assume that comparison is an inherent meaning component in contrast relations. Considering oppositive contrast, in particular, the comparator determines a common conceptual ground on the basis of which a high degree of similarity between the related propositions emerges. Despite the fact that each proposition instantiates it in a distinct way, the comparator keeps both of them orientated to a common topic.

Another characteristic of oppositional sets that is important to the analysis conducted here is their binary structure. As Murphy highlights, both canonical contrast sets and contextually dependent pairs that co-occur in antonym-like patterns are characterized by a binary structural organization (2003: 204), which works as a kind of hallmark of antonymic contrast. In the face of semantic-pragmatic and syntactic hallmarks of antonymy, we, as listeners and readers, understand that a given set of concepts must be related under the RC-LC principle and thus be interpreted as similar with one relevant difference.

15.4.2 The contrastive uses of *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que*: switch contexts

Although the emergence of the first contrastive uses of each marker takes place in different time spans—an issue with which I will be concerned in Section 15.5—they are noticeably similar, as illustrated by the examples below. Both *enquanto* and *enquanto que* can express contrast, which is why I refer to both forms by *enquanto (que)* in this section. Because of the objectives of the chapter, I will not be able to address the distributional and other differences between the two morphological variants here, which do not have implications for the analysis conducted (cf. Ferrari 2024 for an analysis of the differences between them). (1) and (2) represent the contrastive uses of *enquanto (que)*, whereas (3) and (4) show contrastive occurrences of *ao passo que*.

- (1) Lembro que me surpreendi com a falta de conectividade na Alemanha em 2019, pois custava uns 30 euros comprar um chip pré-pago sem crédito **enquanto que** em 2018 comprei um na Finlândia por 7 euros e já vinha com 5 euros de crédito. (20-2/21COMP, 12)

'I remember I was surprised by the poor internet connection in Germany in 2019, because it cost around 30 euros to buy a pre-paid SIM card without any credits **whereas** in 2018 I bought one in Finland for 7 euros, and it already had 5 euros in credits.'

- (2) A geração dos nossos pais adorava receber visita, **enquanto** a nossa geração 28+ detesta com todas as forças. (20-2/21COMP, 13)

'Our parents' generation loved to have people over, **whereas** our over-28 generation hates it very much.'

- (3) É em suma a teoria que Landulfo expusera seis anos antes, mas para condená-la, **ao passo que** o novo libelista trata de coonestá-la por julgar D. Pedro o 'mais brasileiro dos brasileiros, o mais liberal dos liberais'. (20-2/21HGCB, 66)

'It's basically the theory that Landulfo exposed six years earlier, but he did it to condemn it, **whereas** the new libelista wants to honor it because he considers D. Pedro to be "the most Brazilian of all Brazilians, the most liberal one".'

- (4) Se a terra he dura, secca, e cansada, [...], a raiz principal he destituída de forças para a furar, e penetrar, vendo-se obrigada a curvar-se sobre si mesma, donde vem, que, não encontrando a frescura, e gordura, de que tem mister, se secca logo, e a árvore, que ella sustenta, acontece o mesmo, **ao passo que**, quando encontra huma terra nova, que não tem sido calçada; e que ainda tem toda a sua força, ella a penetra facilmente, alarga-se, e se fortifica. (19-1FBIII3, 90)

'If the farmland is tough, dry and overused, [...] the main root is not strong enough to penetrate, being forced to bend around itself, which causes it, as it does not find the freshness and the fatness it needs, to become dry soon, and with the tree that it sustains, the same happens, **whereas**, when it encounters a young farmland, which has not been cultivated; and which still has all its strength, it penetrates it easily, expanding itself, and becoming stronger.'

As can be seen in the examples, the contrastive *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* constructions show some variation in terms of the types of antonym pairings that serve as the basis for the opposition. Both markers can relate either canonical or non-canonical antonymic pairs. An example of a canonical pair is *adorar/detestar* in (2), which is similar in meaning to the pairing *love/hate* in English, whereas all the other examples consist of non-canonical contrast sets, where oppositions come about between expressions that do not hold conventionally established antonymic

relations. In (3), for instance, *condenar* and *coonestar*, which are close to *condemn* and *honour* in English, are not easily recalled as antonyms in neutral contexts. Likewise, in (4), the opposition used to describe the different kinds of farmland is grounded in sets of words that do not form fixed paradigmatic antonymic relations in Brazilian Portuguese: *tough*, *dry*, and *overused* are opposed to *young* and a whole clause, viz. *that has not been cultivated*.

In every contrastive *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* construction, the opposition is built up from at least two pairs or sets of words. There are, however, cases where more than two pairs are antonymically related. In (1), for example, the opposition is established on the basis of four antonymic pairs: *em 2019 vs em 2018*, *na Alemanha vs na Finlândia*, *30 euros vs 7 euros* and *sem crédito vs com 5 euros de crédito*. Alternatively, in (4), while each of the members linked by *ao passo que* exhibits fairly extensive sentences consisting of many adjectives or adjective phrases, there are only two oppositional pairs, insofar as each segment of attributive expressions plays the role of describing in detail each contingent scenario to which they are associated, but the characteristics presented go in the same direction. Hence, the first segment refers to a range of conditions that disfavour land cultivation, while the second presents conditions that make the land appropriate.

Regardless of the nature of the antonymic pairs involved (whether canonical or not) and how many pairs take part in the opposition, there is always a comparator leading to a number of correspondences between the contrast sets linked by *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que*, among which a relevant difference can be identified. Because of this dynamic relationship between maximal similarity and minimal difference, the related segments are both semantically and syntactically parallel.

In (1), for instance, at least four facets of the speaker's experience with buying a SIM card in different countries and periods of time are contrasted, regarding the temporal and the spatial locations themselves, as well as the amount of credit available on the card and the price paid for it. When confronted, all these aspects entail close parallels between the two members of the construction, starting with the fact that for each one of the aspects mentioned in the first segment there is a counterpart in the second one. As a result, the members come to share a number of expressions that belong to the same semantic field, such as the nouns denoting countries, the adverbial phrases that refer to the year when the speaker visited each country, and the numbers that specify the amount of credits and the price of the card.

The comparator behind the relationship that holds between the segments linked by *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* can always be objectively described in terms of a common topic.³ In (1)–(4), the common topic to which both members are orientated could be defined as SIM card purchase conditions, subjective attitudes

³ *Common topic* is indeed used by Lakoff (1971) to characterize semantic opposition *but*.

towards having people over, subjective positions towards the theory at issue, and a root growth conditions, respectively.

It is within the frame of each topic that the aspects of difference are fleshed out. Regardless of how many aspects are raised in each segment with regard to the topic at issue, both segments remain orientated to this topic, and this contributes to the focus on the contrast that is considered to exist between them. Even when several antonymic pairs are raised, such as in (1), as seen above, all of them represent, in each segment, a single stance with respect to the common topic, or comparator. Hence, still considering (1), the price of the SIM card in Germany and the fact that it did not contain any available credits are both aspects that are presented by the speaker to convey their negative evaluation of the purchase process in question. Alternatively, the price of the card in Finland and the number of credits available there are raised to express a more positive evaluation of the conditions of purchase in another country, giving support to the argument that connectivity services in Germany leave a lot to be desired. Abstractly, the opposition in this case could then be subsumed as one between good versus bad, and the various oppositional sets are used by the speaker to reinforce the elementary contrast they aim to defend. In the other examples given above, as well as in the other constructions in the corpus, the contrast sets can similarly be simplified under an abstract and single opposition involving a subjective stance, which can belong either to the speaker or to other individuals mentioned in the construction, as can be seen in (2) and (3), for instance.

The semantic similarities are also accompanied by formal similarities in the *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* contrastive constructions, which may either share linguistic material or have equivalent syntactic structures. (1) provides an example of the former. The segments contain more than one pair of identical linguistic forms, such as *euros* (30 euros vs 7 euros), *crédito(s)* (*sem crédito* vs 5 euros *de crédito*), and, most importantly, the verb *comprar*, which is the lexical form that embraces the essence of the common topic shared by the contrast sets (SIM card purchase conditions, as signalled above). In (2) and (4), the repetition of *generation* and *penetrar*, respectively, also exemplifies the sharing of linguistic material.

In addition, the data show many instances of elliptical elements, which also provide evidence of similarity at the formal level. As discussed by Quirk et al. (1985: 929), ellipsis involves a systematic correspondence between the clause where some linguistic material is present and the clause that leaves it out. In (1), for instance, see the ellipsis of *chip pré-pago* ('SIM card') in the second segment.

Now, in terms of equivalence in syntactic structure, the data show two possibilities. There are cases where internal structures are similar, such as the adverbial phrases that, in (1), express the temporal locations at issue (both are based in the preposition *em*—*em 2019* vs *em 2018*). It is relevant that the speaker chooses this type of adverbial phrase for both segments even if there is a number of other ways

to refer to the different periods of time. In other cases, the whole syntactic organization of the segments is parallel, with semantically similar forms occupying corresponding syntactic positions. (4) provides an example here, as both segments linked by *ao passo que* start with a conditional sentence describing the contingent factors that affect the growth of the plant. While the conjunction used in each case is different (*se* in the first segment, *quando* in the second one), this specific ordering, by which the conditional sentence precedes the main clause, contributes to a parallel organization of the segments, which is particularly important if we take into account that the ordering of conditional sentences in relation to the main clause varies considerably in Brazilian Portuguese.

As is typical of antonymic contrast (see [Section 15.4.1](#)), the syntactic frame is invariably binary, and *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* are categorically placed at the boundary between the two related propositions. This syntactic position represents a significant change in relation to the original uses, since, when expressing time, either in the exclusively temporal usage pattern (see [Section 15.4.3](#)) or in the temporal-contrastive uses (see [Section 15.4.4](#)), both markers tend to appear before the main clause. I will return to this issue in the next sections, but I will not explore it in great detail here, as the chapter aims at a more detailed account of the meaning side of the transition from simultaneity to opposition.

Finally, I point out another feature that has important implications for the diachronic analysis proposed. As contrast markers, *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* link states of affairs that never overlap in space or time. The data show three different scenarios, in which the markers link propositions that either:

- (i) describe states of affairs that are explicitly distant in both space and time, as in (1) above;
 - (ii) contain overt indications of temporal distance between the related events, but no specification of a spatial location, which results in a relation that is similar to the previous one, as temporally distant states of affairs cannot overlap in space, as seen in (5) below, as well as in (2) and (3) above, or
 - (iii) do not make any reference to a precise spatial location or time interval, while an interpretation in terms of either spatial or temporal overlapping is still unavailable. This scenario can be seen in (4) above and in (6) below.
- (5) Talvez eu simplesmente esteja mais inspirada esse mês mas tenho a impressão que o reading journal está me ajudando muito a desenrolar com as minhas leituras. Já li três livros só esse mês **enquanto que** em outubro foi um! (COMP20-2/21, 9)

‘Maybe I am just more inspired this month but I have the feeling that the reading journal is helping me a lot to keep going with my readings. I’ve already read three books this month **whereas** in October I read one!’

- (6) O capitalismo ao menos oferece a liberdade aos cidadãos, **enquanto que** comunismo, socialismo escraviza! (COMP20-2/21, 2)
 ‘Capitalism at least offers freedom to people, **whereas** communism, socialism makes people slaves!’

In the contrastive uses, therefore, the dimension of time is either irrelevant (iii) or constitutes one of the antonymic pairs ((i) and (ii)). Both cases are opposed to the *temporal overlap* that is the essence of the source contexts, as explained in the next section.⁴ The original meaning being blocked, I thus assume that the uses in question correspond to Heine’s (2002) switch contexts, which, in the terminology proposed by the author, are contexts where the new meaning is the only interpretation available.

15.4.3 The temporal uses of *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que*: source contexts

In the source contexts, both *enquanto* and *ao passo que* function as temporal connectives, which are themselves the outcome of language change.⁵ *Passo* comes from Latin *passus* (‘step’), and is still used in contemporary Brazilian Portuguese as a noun that refers to the movement of the feet when walking, as in *Esto era bem mil passos da cela* (14th century, Machado Filho 2013) (*This was around 1,000 steps from the jail*). *Enquanto*, in turn, is derived from the merger of the preposition *em* (‘in’) with the pronoun *quantus* (‘much’) (Latin > Port. *quanto*) (Longhin 2016). Historical data suggest that the merger of the two forms took place in contexts such as (7):

- (7) [...] e çarrou Deus os ventres de todas as molheres de casa d’Abimelec, em guisa que non concebia nemhũa **em quanto** hi esteve Sara. (14th century, Longhin 2016: 276)
 ‘[...] and God made all the women in d’Abimelec’s house infertile, in such a way that none of them was able to give birth **as long as/while** Sara was there.’

Enquanto and *ao passo que* as temporal connectives are thus etymologically unrelated. (8) and (9) below illustrate each of them, respectively.

⁴ As Section 15.4.3 is dedicated to the source meaning, this particular difference between the original and the new contexts should become clearer in that section, whereas its importance from the evolutionary perspective will be treated in Section 15.4.4.

⁵ When expressing temporal relations, *enquanto* is not used in its periphrastic form. I will thus only make reference to the variant *enquanto* in this section.

- (8) **Em quanto** o cachorro farejava por toda a parte, Bubião foi sentar-se na cadeira onde estivera. (19-2QUBO, 93)

'While the dog was sniffing around, Bubião sat down on the chair where he was before.'

- (9) A agua nao tardou em tomar exactamente os mesmos caracteres que os dois liquores espirituosos. Primeiramente ficou vermelha, ao depois mais, e mais se fez loura, **ao passo que** a digestão se foi continuando. (19-1 FBII1, 99)

'The water didn't take long to resemble the two liquor drinks. First the colour was red, later it became more and more yellow, **while** the digestion continued.'

As can be observed in the examples, the state of affairs contained in the adverbial clause with *enquanto* and *ao passo que* sets a temporal frame within which the state of affairs in the main clause unfolds, indicating temporal simultaneity. There is thus a component of similarity in the relation established by the markers in the source contexts: a simultaneity relation entails *similarity in time*.

In the contrastive uses, as previously discussed, the similarity component is tied to the common topic, or comparator, that the related segments share. The establishment of a comparator is strongly connected with the mental world of the interlocutors, who subjectively create comparative relations on the basis of personal beliefs and opinions. As we saw in the previous section, each contrast set linked by *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* is associated with a subjective attitude. The similarity component that is found in the switch contexts, therefore, can be argued to be more abstract and of a more subjective nature. In the temporal uses, in turn, the inherent similarity is more concrete, since the conceptual domain of time relies more on real-world experience than the domain of comparisons does (Heine et al. 1991).

Further evidence of this is provided by the fact that the temporal simultaneity expressed by the markers tends to be accompanied by spatial overlapping as well. While not all occurrences consist of states of affairs that happen at the same time *and* at the same place, this scenario is observed in the majority of the temporal uses—more than 90 per cent of the temporal occurrences in all the time spans analysed. In (8) above, for example, the dog and the character called Bubião are physically sharing the same space. Likewise, in (9), the chemical process of digestion at issue is physically close to the changes in colours. As events do not need to show physical contiguity to take place at the same time, the fact that they consistently show it in the source contexts with *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* reinforces their strong grounding in the socio-physical world.

Despite its more concrete nature in the source contexts, similarity is thus a common meaning component between simultaneity and opposition. In the temporal usage pattern, however, it is located exclusively at the temporal axis, not being

instantiated in as many different ways as it is in the contrastive pattern, as seen above. Actually, the data show that, as temporal connectives, *enquanto* (*que*) and *ao passo que* relate states of affairs that are semantically considerably different from each other. In (8) presented above, for instance, *farejar* ('snif'), an action performed by a dog, belongs to a semantic field that differs from the semantic field of *sentar-se* ('sit down'), which is done in the context by a man. Even when the subject of the adverbial clause and the subject of the main clause are the same, which is the case with many occurrences in the data, as in (10) below, there is not the same kind of semantic and formal similarity that is observed in the contrastive uses. In (10), for example, the same subject simultaneously performs two acts that are related only by the fact that they are performed by the same person and that they overlap in time, but which do not share a common topic that is invariable regardless of its different instantiations, as is the case in the switch contexts.

(10) **Enquanto** acendia o cigarro olhou para o homem (20-1CAAR, 91)

'While lighting up a cigarette, he looked at the man.'

In this perspective, I propose that, while the contrastive contexts are characterized by maximal similarity and minimal difference, the temporal contexts show the opposite scenario of maximal difference and minimal similarity. In each case, the meaning component that is at the minimal degree is precisely the meaning that defines the usage pattern in that group of contexts: in opposition, there are fewer aspects of difference, but it is the difference between the connected segments that is communicatively more important; in simultaneity, the minimal aspect of similarity, which is temporal similarity, is also the primary meaning that the markers express.

I also draw attention to the fact that, to state the concomitance of two events, one necessarily has to first compare them, in the sense that the perception and formulation of a simultaneous relationship need to be preceded by an evaluation of how one event evolves as regards the other in time. That means that establishing a simultaneity relation seems to involve a cognitive operation that is more complex than might be expected, namely comparing two states of affairs from the perspective of time and observing that they are temporally similar. It can be argued, then, that the source contexts already show a sort of comparator, which, however, differently from the contrastive uses, does not vary from one construction to another—the commonality here is always the dimension of time.

15.4.4 The temporal-contrastive uses of *enquanto* (*que*) and *ao passo que*: bridging contexts

The data show a group of contexts where *enquanto* (*que*) and *ao passo que* still express simultaneity relations, but a comparator can also be recognized, giving

the propositions a semantic and structural organization that is remarkably similar to the one that characterizes the contrastive constructions, as described in [Section 15.4.2](#). The commonality between the segments, therefore, does not lie only in how the states of affairs develop in the temporal axis, as I have argued to be the case in the source contexts. There is also a common topic depicted between the related segments.

As a result, the temporal-contrastive constructions exhibit an extensive set of similarities between the opposed propositions. In fact, as is illustrated by (11)–(16) below, just like in the switch contexts, the similarity meaning component gains prominence in comparison with the scenario observed in the source contexts, where the markers link two propositions consisting of verbs and other linguistic forms that describe clearly distinct processes and situations (recall, e.g. the temporal overlap between lighting up a cigarette and looking at something in (10) above). By contrast, both in bridging and switch contexts, this scenario changes, and the propositions display forms that belong to the same or to a close semantic field, which leads to a high degree of similarity in the composition of the related segments in terms of their lexico-grammatical structure.

Although it is not possible to spotlight all the aspects of similarity between the propositions linked by temporal-contrastive *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* here, some terms and constructions stand out in the examples. In (11)–(16), I highlight some parts of the oppositional sets that make the semantic closeness between the propositions explicit.

- (11) As relações mercantis com o Oriente tinham se dissipado. No anno de 1789, **ao passo que** no porto de Lisbôa entravam somente quatro navios chegados da Índia, fundeavam cento e quinze procedentes do Brazil. (19-2ALCB, 127)

‘The trading relations with the East had faded. In 1789, **while/whereas** only four ships which had arrived from India entered Lisbon’s seaport, one hundred and fifteen from Brazil anchored there.’

- (12) As vezes Augusto olhava para seus companheiros, e os via alegremente praticando com as bellas senhoras, que abrihantavão a sala **emquanto** elle se via obrigado a ouvir a mais insuportável de todas as historias. (19-1MORE, 24)

‘Sometimes Augusto looked at his mates and saw them happily talking to the beautiful ladies, who brought joy to the room, **while/whereas** he was forced to listen to the most unbearable of all stories.’

- (13) Nos primeiros dias de agosto, publicava o Jornal do Commercio do Rio de Janeiro, que apenas um jornal na Corte, e dois nas Províncias, se batiam contra a dita reforma, **ao passo que** todos os maiores órgãos de imprensa, do Pará ao Rio Grande do Sul, se pronunciavam calorosamente por ela. (20-2/21 HGCB, 81)

'In the beginning of August, the *Jornal do Commercio* from Rio de Janeiro published that only one newspaper in the court and two in the provinces were against the reform in question, **while/whereas** all the biggest press organizations, from Pará to Rio Grande do Sul, were speaking in favour of it.'

- (14) Adriano vae devorar o almoço que nos estava preparado no hotel, **emquanto** Cincinnato almoçará aqui comigo e Helena. Vae, Adriano, deixa-nos. (19-2REPE, 40)

'Adriano will devour the lunch that was prepared for us in the hotel, **while/whereas** Cincinnato will have lunch here with Helena and me.'

- (15) Entre os que lhe dedicam uma parcella de sua actividade mental, notareis que uns se afferram, talvez um tantinho a mais do que fora de mister, á tradição, ao passo que outros liberalmente transigem com o meio em que se vão formando. (19-2REPE, 15)

'[...] Among those who dedicate some of their brain activity, you will note that some get stuck, maybe a little bit more than necessary, to the tradition, **while/whereas** others openly interact with the environment where they are raised.'

- (16) É verdade que a Vicente, nunca ocorrera casar. **Emquanto que** a pobre Mariinha, já alinhava risonhamente as primeiras peças da futura felicidade, e as noites sonhava com uma casa muito grande e muito branca. (20-10QUI, 69)

'The truth is that it had never occurred to Vicente to get married **while/whereas** Mariinha smilingly dreamed about how happy she would be when she was married, and at night she used to dream about a very big and white house.'

The common topic of each construction can be defined, respectively, as: ships that arrived in Lisbon's seaport in 1789; people's interactional circumstances within a given social event; the positions of the press on a certain reform; places where people will have lunch; people's openness to receive influence from the environment; and men's and women's stance on marriage.

Within each common topic, the contrast sets are established, and, similarly to the exclusively contrastive contexts, the number of oppositional sets can vary among the temporal-contrastive constructions. However, regardless of how many sets exist in each segment, they always converge into a single evaluative position, in such a way that the difference meaning component here can also be subsumed under a single opposition.

There is, however, a crucial difference between the bridging and the switch contexts in this respect. As discussed in [Section 15.4.2](#), in the latter, all the antonymic pairs in each segment represent a single subjective attitude in relation to the

comparator. Thus, in (4), for instance, which has, in my view, the least obvious subjective position among the contrastive occurrences found in the data, the first segment conveys the viewpoint that the described circumstances disfavour the plant growth. Conversely, all the words and constructions in the second segment refer to favourable development conditions, which reveal the speaker's positive stance towards them, as conditions that should be sought for the purpose of growing a plant. A single and more abstract opposition thus emerges, one between favourable versus unfavourable scenarios for the development of plants.

In the temporal-contrastive pattern, on the other hand, not every construction can be argued to convey a subjective attitude, or a stance on some matter. As an example, we can consider (11) above, where *ao passo que* establishes a more objective relationship that involves the number of ships that arrived at Lisbon's seaport in 1789 and their origins. A similar case is (14), in which the difference is also concerned with more objective properties, and the contrast sets are based in the different places where different individuals will have lunch. In (12), (13), (15), and (16), by contrast, either the speaker's or the referred-to individual's stance on the issue covered by the comparator can be acknowledged.

This fluctuation is diachronically relevant. In accordance with the bridging stage where it is found, it constitutes evidence of an intermediate evolutionary phase in which the original meaning is always associated with an elementary trait of the innovative meaning (the comparator), but may or may not show subjective attitudes tied to the primary opposition established.

At the formal level, although some correspondences between the structures of the segments can be identified, I assume they are not as salient as they are in the exclusively contrastive pattern. This is, in my analysis, also in accordance with the diachronic stage that the contexts at focus represent, given that, at this stage, both closeness to the new uses and fluctuations in meaning and form are expected.

Most important to the analysis proposed here is an inversion that the bridging contexts reveal in the degrees of prominence of the similarity and difference meaning components, in comparison with the source contexts. The strong similarity between the propositions, aligned with a single primary opposition that can be extracted from the contrast sets, brings to the bridging contexts the semantic configuration of maximal similarity and minimal difference that, following [Murphy \(2003\)](#), I assume to be the essence of oppositional relations and, thus, of the contrastive uses of *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que*.

I further propose that this inversion prepares the ground for reanalysis, and that it is the direct result of pragmatic processes of inferencing, by which hearers perceive the simultaneity relations expressed by the markers as having more in common than temporal overlapping. While speakers can aim at formulating a relation that is both temporal and oppositive, hearers need to identify a comparator and its different instantiations in each segment to associate the original simultaneity meaning of *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* with opposition. This is

an essentially pragmatic strengthening process: the identification of a comparator and the interpretation of the propositions as contrasting within the frame created by that comparator is strongly dependent on pragmatic inferencing.

Since simultaneity is the established interpretation of the markers, hearers perceive opposition as a relevant interpretation in bridging contexts (along with the simultaneity relation) by counting on knowledge of different sorts. In line with Hansen (2021b), I assume that not only linguistic and co-textual knowledge comes into play but also extra-linguistic, situational, and/or encyclopaedic knowledge. The RC-LC principle, for example, plays an important role here (see Section 15.4.1) in allowing language users to infer that the relationship between the propositions must be interpreted not only in terms of simultaneity but also (and, depending on the context, more importantly) within the context of a common topic on account of which they show a number of correspondences but differ from each other within a main opposition.

Pragmatic inferencing based on situational and world knowledge, in turn, is always involved in the interpretation of contrastive meanings, if we take it that contrast does not exist in the real world, but is subjectively created by language users (Sweetser 1990; Schwenter 1999; Lang 2000; Lang and Adamíková 2007). Nonetheless, in the case of the temporal-contrastive contexts discussed here, pragmatic inferences are central to the emergence of the new interpretation, given that the original meaning is still available. In (12), for instance, the opposition draws to a great extent on inferring that talking to women who are considered to be beautiful—the situation experienced by Augusto's friends in the event at hand—is better than listening to a boring story. The example does contain terms that contribute to the interpretation of the states of affairs in question as contrasting, such as *alegremente* ('happily') and *belas senhoras* ('beautiful ladies'), on one hand, and *obrigado* ('forced') and *insuportável* ('unbearable'), on the other. However, the oppositional relation depends on hearers counting on their knowledge of the world and subjective beliefs to associate terms like these on contrastive grounds.

There is evidence in the data to suggest that changes in how the states of affairs relate to one another in space and time also accompany the process. There are three possible configurations of the temporal-contrastive constructions in terms of that relation. Temporal overlap is always present, inasmuch as the source meaning is still available, but the states of affairs can:

- (i) overlap in space, similarly to the exclusively temporal contexts, as in (11–12) above,
- (ii) be distant in space, which is seen by overt different spatial locations, as in (13–14),
- (iii) fail to refer to a physical space, as in (15–16).

Diachronically, in both trajectories in focus, the third scenario evolves as the most frequent one in contemporary Brazilian Portuguese (I refer to Ferrari 2024 for

more details on this change), which means that the spatial location of the states of affairs becomes less and less important over time when the temporal meaning expressed by the markers is associated with opposition. Taking into consideration that the exclusively temporal uses show a strong tendency towards both spatial and temporal overlap, and that the exclusively contrastive uses do not overlap in any of these dimensions, it appears that the dissociation of the related states of affairs in the dimensions of both space and time is a relevant conceptual reorganization in both trajectories. This dissociation is closely connected to the change in the level of meaning in which *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* operate, from the socio-physical to the cognitive domain, as I argue in the next section.

In Table 15.1, I systematize the most relevant aspects of the transition from simultaneity to opposition that were explored in this section in the light of the two meaning components that I propose are part of both conceptual domains.

Table 15.1 The transition from simultaneity to opposition

		Simultaneity >	Simultaneity/ Opposition	>Opposition
M E A N I N G	Similarity	Minimal In time and space, temporal overlap	Maximal In time (temporal overlap) + States of affairs maximally similar within the common frame of a comparator + Equivalent (or nearly equivalent) communicative status between the linked segments	Maximal States of affairs maximally similar within the common frame of a comparator Equivalent communica- tive status between the linked segments
	Difference	Maximal States of affairs not semantically related	Minimal Different instantiations of the comparator	Minimal Different instantiations of the comparator
		Asymmetrical communicative status between the linked segments	In space, spatial distance (in bridging contexts of the second type presented above)	
Syntax		Micro-syntax Syntactic dependence	Micro or macro-syntax More or less syntactic dependence depending on the context	Macro-syntax Weaker or no syntactic dependence

While this chapter focuses on the meaning changes undergone by *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que*, it is worth mentioning that the reanalysis that leads the transition from simultaneity to opposition is accompanied by actualization, as defined in [Section 15.2](#). As can be seen in (8)–(10) above, in the original usage pattern, the temporal clause with *enquanto* and *ao passo que* tends to precede the main clause, and is always syntactically dependent on it. Since the adverbial clause provides a temporal frame within which the state of affairs described in the main clause unfolds, it is communicatively backgrounded, and the centre of attention of the message lies in the main clause. Conversely, in switch contexts, the clause with *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* constitutes one of the backbones of the comparison, and thus contains a proposition that is communicatively as important as the proposition presented by the other clause.

Since the clause introduced by the markers gains communicative independence, a new syntactic construction comes about, one that shows a greater degree of syntactic independence. Following Hansen (this volume), I consider that the syntactic configuration observed in the source contexts corresponds to the level of micro-syntax (sentence grammar), whereas the syntactic independence seen in the switch contexts corresponds to the level of macro-syntax.

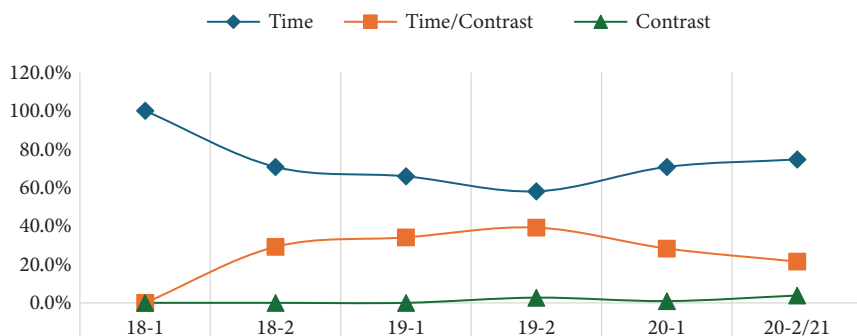
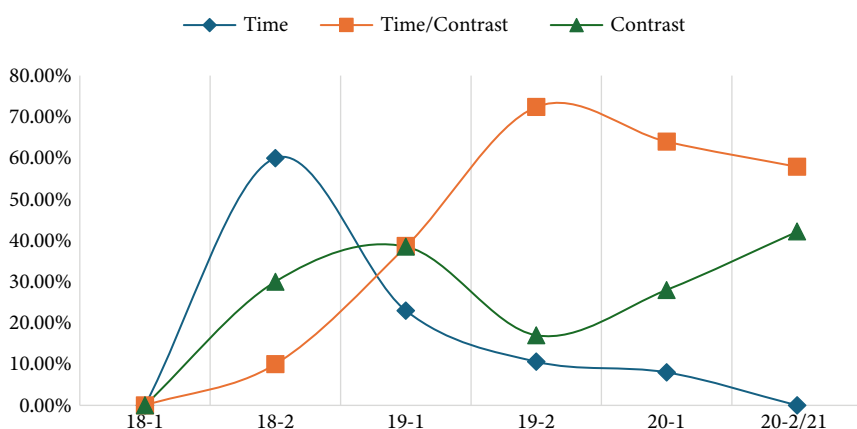
15.5 The cyclical renewal of opposition

The analysis conducted in the previous section was orientated to the chapter's objective of elucidating cognitive and semantic-pragmatic affinities between simultaneity and opposition. In the present section, I analyse and compare the diachronic evolution of the two markers. The section thus focuses on the chapter's aim of examining their development in a cyclical manner.

It is important to emphasize that the aspects of change discussed so far manifest in similar ways in the trajectories of both *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que*. Inasmuch as evolutionary similarities are at the centre of attention when it comes to cyclicity phenomena, the parallels found in the trajectories studied provide the basis for the analysis of their pattern of evolution in this section. [Figures 15.1](#) and [15.2](#) show the diachronic evolution of the source, the bridging and the switch contexts of *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que*.⁶

As can be observed, in the current stage of Brazilian Portuguese, the temporal contexts with *ao passo que* are no longer found, whereas the temporal uses of *enquanto* are the most frequent in all the time spans. Interestingly, however,

⁶ For reasons of space and in view of the primary objectives of the chapter, I refer the reader to [Ferrari \(2024\)](#) for a more detailed examination of the trajectories of *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que*. For my purpose here, I will concentrate on the facts of change connected with cyclicity.

Figure 15.1 Types of contexts with *enquanto (que)*Figure 15.2 Types of contexts with *ao passo que*

the temporal-contrastive contexts with *ao passo que* are still available, which indicates its strong association with contrast: it can express temporal relations, as long as they take an oppositional shape.

With respect to the switch contexts, the data reveal that both markers are used to express contrast in contemporary Brazilian Portuguese, but the qualitative investigation of the nature of the texts where each marker appears to suggest that *ao passo que* has gone through contextual specialization. As a contrast marker, it is now used in formal interactions only, whereas *enquanto (que)* is used across different contexts, both formal and informal. Looking into spoken contemporary data (which I analysed in [Ferrari 2018](#)), I observed the same contextual distribution between *ao passo que* and *enquanto (que)*: I only found the former in academic lectures, whereas the latter is as frequent in socio-linguistic interviews and spontaneous interaction data as it is in academic lectures.

In the oldest stages of language considered, however, there are occurrences of temporal-contrastive and contrastive *ao passo que* in both personal letters and

theatrical comedies in which it is possible to see the author's attempt to represent everyday interactions—in some of them, as I explain in [Ferrari \(2024\)](#), the prologue explicitly states the intention to address the 'linguagem do povo' ('language of the people').

Another relevant difference between the trajectories is that *ao passo que* has developed into a contrast marker earlier than *enquanto (que)*. It is available in the data from the second half of the 18th century onwards, as opposed to *enquanto (que)*, whose first contrastive occurrences in the corpus are in the second half of the 19th century.

Without neglecting the limits of historical data for theoretical and empirical assumptions, if, in fact, as shown by the data, oppositive contrast was early expressed by *ao passo que* in different sorts of contexts while *enquanto (que)* arises later as another marker of opposition, also for various sorts of contexts, the fact that *ao passo que* has become confined to formal interactional settings makes it plausible to admit that opposition is being renewed, with *enquanto (que)* gaining ground over *ao passo que* across the centuries.

In line with [Hansen \(2018a/b\)](#), I conceive of onomasiological semantic-pragmatic cycles as processes in which a similar context-level meaning is renewed by etymologically unrelated forms that have similar content-level meanings. According to the author, context-level uses are concerned with speakers' comments on the relation established between the states of affairs and the discourse. This is the level of meaning where *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que* operate in the role of contrast markers. Alternatively, the content level of meaning, where I assume the temporal uses of the markers belong, is associated with relations between states of affairs in the real world (or in an imagined world) ([Hansen 2008: 133](#)). As discussed, in the function of temporal connectives, *enquanto* and *ao passo que* link states of affairs that are related in the socio-physical world, overlapping either in both space and time or exclusively in time. The change from simultaneity to opposition involves, thus, the transition of the markers from the content to the context level of meaning.

I propose here that the renewal of opposition by etymologically unrelated forms that originally express simultaneity relations can be explained, at least partially, by the metonymic relationship between simultaneity and opposition. As discussed in the previous section, both meanings are based in both similarity and difference, a semantic affinity that makes them prone to be perceived as conceptually close. This similarity in meaning is a relevant trigger for similar processes of inferencing in bridging contexts and, ultimately, reanalysis.

In fact, in treating the role of inferences in grammaticalization processes, [Bybee \(2010\)](#) has posited that similar sources tend to favour similar patterns of inference. [Hansen \(2018a/b\)](#), who is concerned specifically with semantic-pragmatic cyclic changes, has made a similar point, arguing, on the basis of diachronic evidence, that cyclic developments at the level of semantics and pragmatics take place

because semantically similar source items contribute to the emergence of similar types of inferences. Other authors have also identified the role of similar sources for similar cyclical evolutions, such as [Fedriani and Molinelli \(2020\)](#), who have claimed that speakers cyclically apply recurrent functional principles to different forms.

15.6 Conclusions

In this chapter, I aimed to show that a systematic change in the degrees of prominence of more abstract conceptual components shared between simultaneity and opposition can explain, at least partially, the cyclical renewal of opposition in Brazilian Portuguese out of forms that similarly express temporal overlap. The chapter thus corroborates [Hansen's \(2021b\)](#) assumption that the older established interpretation already contains the innovative one as a virtual presence. From the perspective of cyclicity, this implies that the cyclical reanalysis of opposition in terms of simultaneity is grounded in conceptual affinities between simultaneity and opposition, which can be perceived by hearers as more salient in bridging contexts.

Taking into account specifically the path of change focused on in this chapter, it remains a matter for future research whether trajectories undergone by numerous other *while*-like constructions (cf., for instance, [Scivoletto 2020](#)) look similar to what this study has shown to be the case for *enquanto (que)* and *ao passo que*. A relevant question would be whether there is empirical evidence to argue in favour of a crosslinguistically recurrent contrastive cycle that revolves around the notions of simultaneity and opposition.

Likewise, it appears relevant to investigate whether the *Gestalt* type of structure formed between simultaneity and opposition, which has been revealed by the data adduced in this study, is a recurrent factor in cyclical developments. This would mean examining whether any conceptual domains can be involved in cyclical patterns of change or whether a particular network of conceptual domains is needed for onomasiological cyclical changes to come about, which requires a thorough analysis that goes beyond the most obvious semantic-pragmatic relations. The strategy of analysis adopted here—which is yet to be refined—appears to be a possibility, by the comparison of source, bridging, and switch contexts in terms of their similarities and discrepancies in aspects of various sorts.

Acknowledgements

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Spanish approximators *en plan* and *rollo* between two centuries

Microdiachrony of a pragmatic cycle?

Adrià Pardo Llibrer

16.1 Introduction

This work explores a pragmatic cycle involving the Spanish approximators *en plan* and *rollo* ('kind of', 'like'). As an approximator, *en plan* implies a vague reading of the constituent over which it has scope, acquiring further pragmatic functions in the 20th century that persist up to this day. In a parallel way, *rollo* becomes grammaticalized as an approximator in the 20th century, but data from the 21st century remain unexplored. I hypothesize that *rollo* is currently undergoing the same pragmaticalization pattern as *en plan*, completing an onomasiological cycle involving vague forms which develop formulative and quotative functions.

For this microdiachronic approach, a sample of approximately 300 instances of *en plan* and *rollo* in Peninsular Spanish has been obtained from several datasets, focusing on oral data among young speakers (the primary users of these forms). Excluding some uses of *en plan* and *rollo* considered in the literature, my analysis compares the quantitative distribution of their pragmatic functions in the 21st century. Dealing with the discourse position of *en plan* and *rollo* according to their pragmatic uses, I finally discuss why approximators acquire formulative functions from which quotative functions derive.

16.1.1 The approximators *en plan* and *rollo*

The pragmatic developments of both *en plan* and *rollo* present the same function(s) as English *like* (Romaine and Lange 1991; Tagliamonte 2005) and other Romance discourse markers such as French *genre* or Italian *tipo* (Mihatsch 2007;

Voghera 2013). From a semantic point of view, *en plan* and *rollo* are roughly similar in their central meaning to English ‘kind of’ or ‘somehow’. For instance:¹

- (1) B: la bebida dee d- de las fagotas
 C: (RISAS)
 A: de las fagotas
 B: escúchame cero broma bueno/ cuarenta y tres con granadina yo de eso no me levanto
 A: uy cá[llate había gente que] se hacía cuarenta y dos con chocolate ¿sabes??
 B: [((no me gusta))] que asco ()²
 C: pero/ **en plan chocolate** ¿cómo??
 A: [de li]cor de chocola- no e[s] tipo granadina pero [de chocolate]
 ‘B: the drink of- o- of the faggots.
 C: (LAUGHTER)
 A: of the faggots
 B: listen no joke well/ liquor with grenadine I don’t get up for that
 A: oh shut [up there were people who] drank liquor with chocolate you know?
 B: [((I don’t like))] that’s disgusting ()
 C: but/ **kind of chocolate liquor** really??
 A: chocolate [liqu-] no um it[’s] like grenadine but [chocolate flavored]’

In example (1), some friends are talking about the drinks they like to have when they go out partying. Speaker A asserts that some people drink ‘liquor with chocolate’; this strikes Speaker C as odd, asking whether it is really ‘chocolate’ or a drink that is ‘kind of chocolate’. Thus, Speaker C uses *en plan* to yield a non-prototypical reading of the modified predicate ‘chocolate’. This fuzzy, non-prototypical reading traditionally relates to the phenomenon of vagueness (Lakoff 1973; Rosch 1973; Channell 1985, 1994) and allows explaining the meaning of *en plan* in terms of an approximator.

For the purpose of this study, I consider approximators—also known as approximates (Sadock 1981; Horn 2009; Llopis Cardona 2016), hedges (Crismore, Markkanen, and Steffensen 1993; Mihatsch 2007, 2010, 2013), vagueifiers (Eklund 2001, 2005), rounders (Krifka 2007), or bushes (Caffi 2007)—as forms introducing a vague denotation into a given utterance (Pardo Llibrer 2017, 2023), implying a suspension of its truth-conditions assignment. The approximator *en plan*

¹ Example obtained from Pons Bordería, Salvador (dir.): *Corpus Val.Es.Co3.0*. www.valesco.es (12 June 2023).

² The brackets correspond to the fragments of overlapped speech (see Val.Es.Co. Research Group 2014 on the transcription conventions for spoken discourse).

introduces vagueness, as (following Sadock and Zwicky's tests; 1975, 1986) the utterance cannot be cancelled by either affirmative or negative readings:

(2) Un licor *en plan* de chocolate (ΔP)

'A kind of chocolate liquor'

?? 'A kind of chocolate liquor', and a chocolate liquor

?? 'A kind of chocolate liquor', but a non-chocolate liquor

Besides this central approximator meaning, the literature has described two main pragmatic functions of *en plan* (Jørgensen 2009; Méndez Orense 2016; Rodríguez Lage 2017; Borreguero Zuloaga 2018): a formulative function (i.e. *en plan* as a filler used for planning purposes) and a quotative function (i.e. *en plan* as a marker of reported speech). Formulative *en plan* allows the speaker to keep the turn, filling the flow of speech in a conversation (López-Serena and Borreguero Zuloaga 2010). For instance:³

(4) D: [¿¿pero de qué van??] ¿¿de abstemias?? [o seaa]

C: [es que- qué vergüenza]

A: [pero tú ese día- t- ese ya- ya estabaas]

B: [no a ver yo creo pero Juli yo creo que-]/ [yo **en plan**-] yo creo que ENTIENDO **en plan**- ell- como- la actitud de la gente porque era un pocoo **en plan**- como que [tú estás en primero estás superinseguro no sabes cómo van-]

D: sí que esta[ba sí]

'D: [but what's wrong with them?] are they pretending to abstain? [I mean]

C: [It's just- how embarrassing!]

A: [but you that day y- you were al- already there]

B: [no see I think but Juli I think-]/ I think [**like**-] I think it's I

UNDERSTAND **like**- they just- guys' attitude because it was a little bit **like**- as if [you were in the first course and you're feeling really unsure you don't know how everything works-]

D: I [was indeed]

In (4), a group of friends are talking about the image that some people portray on social networks when they start university: Speaker D criticizes some friends for presenting themselves as very formal people; in response, Speaker B argues that this is due to the insecurities of first-year students. In B's intervention,⁴ *en plan*

³ Example obtained from Pons Bordería, Salvador (dir.): *Corpus Val.Es.Co. 3.0*. www.valesco.es (12 June 2023).

⁴ Hereafter, I refer to each speaker's contribution to a conversation as an *intervention*, disregarding the term *turn*, which has a socio-linguistic, rather than a structural, characterization in my framework (see Val.Es.Co. Research Group 2014).

is involved in a strategy of—in terms of Schegloff (2013: 49, 62)—‘searching’ or ‘reformatting’ (like English *like* or *I mean*; Andersen 2001).

Quotative *en plan*, in turn, introduces reported speech. In the following example,⁵ an actress is talking in an interview about the many hours spent in front of the television:

- (5) A: maratones de diez / de que me dices
 B: sí sí sí mis compañeros
 A: no te entra como
 B: de piso una vez me tuvieron que cortar **en plan** oye Clara va / llevas diez horas aquí metida / hay vida / más allá de / de esta caja cuadrada
 A: ya
 ‘A: a binge-watch for ten hours / figure out
 B: yes yes yes my roomies
 A: don’t you feel like-?
 B: once my roomies had to stop me **like** hey Clara come on you have been stuck around here for ten hours / there’s a life / beyond / beyond this square box
 A: right’

In the flow of speech, *en plan* precedes a reported statement from Clara’s friends encouraging her to go out (italicized in the example). As is usual in spontaneous communication, reported speech is not literally reproduced but rather dramatized or recreated (Tannen 1989; Benavent Payá 2002: 216–219); beyond such differences between types of reported information by *en plan* (Rodríguez-Abruñeiras 2020), I will henceforth refer to such cases as reported speech.

As for *rollo*, this form clearly presents an approximator meaning:⁶

- (6) B: ah no ahí no- ahí nosotros tenemos una lista que pone los [temas] y los ti- al lado los tutores y las plazas entonces es igual que la matrícula hacen un- hacen- cogen todos los alumnos que están matriculados en el refiere al Trabajo Final de este año/ y dicen ver quién tiene más nota y lo ponen el primero y así su- sucesivamente [entonces] abren el plazo y te dicen *a las ocho tú no sé tú te vas metiendo y dices/ quería no te quedan plazas pues tienes que coger otro que sí que queden plazas se van eliminando ¿sabes??* los que se vaa [llenando]
 A: [mm]
 C: ya [ya]
 C: [sí nosotros es] **rollo** así pero en una reunión abierta presencial a todos

⁵ Example obtained from CORPES XXI: www.rae.es/banco-de-datos/corpes-xxi (12 June 2023).

⁶ Example obtained from Pons Bordería, Salvador (dir.): *Corpus Val.Es.Co. 3.0*. www.valesco.es (12 June 2023).

'B: oh no we don't- we have a list with some [topics] and the ad- alongside the advisors and the spots so it's the same as enrollment they t- the- they call all the students who are enrolled in regards to this year's Final Degree Project/ and they check who has a better qualification and they put them first and s- so on [then] they open the period and the tell you *your turn is at eight o'clock* I don't know you start getting in and you say/ *I wanted* if there're no spots left then you have to choose another one that still has spots they're running out you know? as it's getting all [assigned]

A: [mm]

C: I see [I see]

C: [I see for us it's] **more or less** / **kinda** the same but on site in a public event for whoever wants to attend

In (6), Speaker B describes how she chose her Final Degree Project advisor; this process is not exactly the same as that of Speaker C, who uses *rollo* to introduce the approximate interpretation (follow by a *but*-clause, which specifies the contrast.) Besides, as for *en plan*, a formulative function (7) is identified for *rollo*:⁷

- (7) (Talking about the remodelling of a park)

es un parque precioso ¡eh! está- está muy bien hombre ganó el- **rollo** ganó **me refiero** ganó en un sentido perdió en otro porque a mí me quitaron la vista pero sí está ahora mucho más poblado claro y y ahora aquí ya no encuentras aparcamiento **o sea** ya es eeh

'it's a beautiful park huh! it- it's very nice man it improve- **I mean** it improved **I mean** it improved in some sense but lost in another sense because my views were taken away but yes now it's very much populated sure and and now you can't find parking here anymore **I mean** it's already umm'

In (7), *rollo* appears as a filler in hesitant speech with other formulative elements (such as *me refiero* or *o sea*, 'I mean'); furthermore, formulative *rollo* is identified in combination with *en plan* presenting the same function:

- (8) (Talking about the advantages of studying engineering)

no sé si es para estudiar **en plan rollo** estudiar Universidad hacer carrera práctica sí que la recomendaría si es para trabajar una un poco más grande igual mejor porque tiene más oportunidades más empresas más sitios

'I don't know if you want to study **sort of like** to study at the University to pursue a practical degree I would recommend it if you want to work a slightly larger one might be better because it has more opportunities more companies more positions'

⁷ Examples (7) to (9), obtained from CORPES XXI: www.rae.es/banco-de-datos/corpes-xxi (12 June 2023).

Finally, *rollo* also has a quotative function introducing reported speech:

- (9) (Talking about how people nowadays interact)
 o sea hoy por hoy ya nadie te pregunta qué tal estás/ y espera ¿sabes? a que tú le cuentes *oye pues sí tengo un problema/* no- nos hemos convertido en un- **rollo** *¿qué tal estás? bien ah ah*
 ‘I mean nowadays nobody asks how you are/ they are waiting you know? That you tell them *hey! actually I do have a problem/* w- we became a-**like** *how are you? nice mhm mhm*’

In summary, the approximators *en plan* and *rollo* both have two main pragmatic functions: formulation and quotation. Other functions have been described for the approximators, which are not taken into consideration in my analysis. First, the literature has considered *en plan* as a hedging form (Méndez Orense 2016) but also an intensifying element (De Smet and Enghels 2020; Rodríguez-Abrunheiras 2020). The hedging function of *en plan* refers to the mitigation of ‘the assertive force of the utterance’ (Del Barrio de la Rosa and Arroyo Hernández 2021: 249, example 14a):

- (10) No te daba tiempo a conocerlo con profundidad // íbamos de pensión/ o íbamos de hostal / ooo // o alquilábamos una casita en Alicanteee / de estas bajitas así que estuviese completa, pero vamos **en plan** muy humilde // yyy a mm / a esa parte luego a ... a Galicia también
 ‘You did not have time to get to know it in depth // we went to a guest-house / or we went to a hostel / ooo // or we rented a little house in Alicanteee / one of these little ones which was complete, but well [**kind of**] very humble // and ah mm / to that place and then ... to Galicia too’

Independently of the illocutionary modification marked by *en plan* in (10), hedging does not correspond to a separate pragmatic function, but rather to a modal implicature derived from the basic approximator meaning (‘a *kind of* very humble house’ is a marked form for a ‘very humble house’). The context of talking about renting a summer house at the beach, rather than *en plan*, allows us to infer a ‘very humble house’ as a mitigated content.

Secondly, along similar lines, some authors propose that, in certain contexts, quotative *en plan* intensifies the speech act (De la Torre García and Siebold 2020: 239, example 32):

- (11) Y yo en el taxi **en plan**, «¡acelere, coño!»
 ‘And I was in the taxi, **like**, “Step on it, damn it!”’

In (11), *en plan* introduces reported speech and, consequently, corresponds to the quotative function. Now, reported speech reproducing an intensified utterance

is not a strong enough argument to posit intensification as a separate pragmatic function; an utterance such as (11'), with a polite reported information, could equally well be used as an argument in favour of distinguishing a separate hedging function for *en plan*:

- (11') Y yo en el taxi **en plan**, «¿podría darse prisa, por favor?»
 'And I was in the taxi, **like**, "could you please hurry up?"'

Finally, some authors have described a reformulation function for *en plan* (De la Torre García and Siebold 2020; Camargo and Grimalt 2022: 23):

- (12) Encuentro que quizás si hubiera hecho alguna carrera **en plan** / eeh mmm
 de de idiomas eeh ¿cómo se dice? ahora no me sale
 'I consider that maybe if I had pursued a degree **like** / aww umm a degree
 in languages um how do you say? I don't remember right now'

Although reformulation is a separate function from formulation, a case like (12) does not differ from formulative *en plan* since, if *en plan* is omitted, an extended reading persists between the two clauses in (11):

- (12') 'I consider that maybe if I had pursued a degree Ø / aww umm a degree in languages um how do you say? I don't remember right now'

Even accepting a reformulation relation between 'degree' and 'degree in languages', what we have here is a function-form trap (Pons Bordería 2013; Salameh Jiménez 2019, 2020a): *en plan* can appear in reformulative moves, but such contexts are not a test to take reformulation as a specific function of this approximator. For these reasons, I exclude hedging, intensification, and reformulation from the pragmatic functions of *en plan* and *rollo*, restricting my analysis to formulation and quotation deriving from the original approximator meaning.

16.1.2 Two pragmatic functions in a cycle

As shown above, instances with the same pragmatic function for *en plan* and *rollo* are identified in Present-Day Spanish. While these functions have been extensively studied in the case of *en plan*, *rollo* has barely been addressed in the literature, probably due to its recent pragmaticalization as an approximator (as Llopis and Jansegers 2023 show, the first instance of *rollo* documented as an approximator is from the year 1997).

According to Borreguero Zuloaga (2018, 2020), *en plan* undergoes three stages of grammaticalization. From the 16th to the 18th centuries, *en plan* originally had a prospective meaning ('a *plan* to achieve'), evolving during the 18th to the

19th centuries into a prepositional construction with a comparative sense (*en plan de* + noun $\approx$ ‘in the likes of + noun’). This comparative device allows for an approximate reading of the compared element (‘similar to + noun’). Finally, in the 20th century, the approximated interpretation of the noun modified by *en plan* is understood as a non-prototypical category, which results in an approximator meaning. By the late 20th century, pragmatic functions of formulation and quotation emerged, continuing into Present-Day Spanish (Figure 16.1).

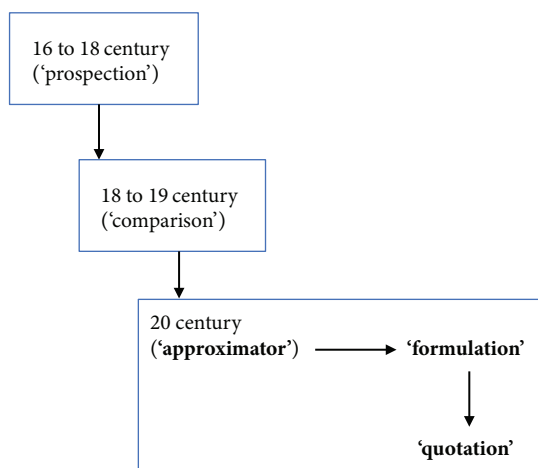


Figure 16.1 Evolution of ‘*en plan*’

Certain approximators in other Romance languages—French *comme* and *genre* (Mihatsch 2009) and Italian *tipo* (Voghera 2013)—or in American Spanish dialects—Mexican *onda* (Mihatsch 2020) and Argentinian *corte* (Mihatsch 2018)—have also developed formulative and quotative pragmatic functions. Argentinian *corte* (‘pattern’), French *genre* (‘genre’), or Italian *tipo* (‘type’) constitute cases of taxonomic words and, in a similar way to *en plan*, some authors have explained their similar pragmatic developments by the capability of taxonomic words to express approximated comparison: ‘[i]f a peripheral member is classified as belonging to a superordinate [taxonomic word], this implies that it only vaguely resembles the prototype or typical example’ (Mihatsch 2007: 230).

However, the case of *rollo* does not fit into this explanation: Mihatsch (2020) has synchronically identified the pragmatic functions of formulation and quotation for *rollo* in Peninsular Spanish, but these functions do not derive from any taxonomic lexeme.⁸ As Llopis Cardona and Jansegers point out (2023), *rollo* originally denotes ‘role’, ‘activity’, or ‘attitude’ in the 20th century. This conceptual meaning shifts to

⁸ As an anonymous reviewer pointed out, ‘attitude’ and ‘mood’ are also the source meanings for the Mexican approximator *onda* (literally, ‘vibe’), which is somehow related to categorization. Still, *onda* and *rollo* do not come from a taxonomic word, leading to further analysis of *onda* akin to the approximator *rollo*, as both non-taxonomic forms denote categorization.

the mental domain, associating *rollo* with a generalizer reading; then, in the final stage of grammaticalization, it acquires the approximator meaning (Figure 16.2).

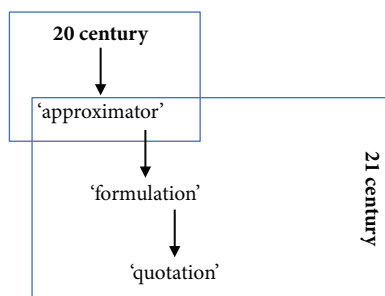


Figure 16.2 Evolution of ‘rollo’

Given that *en plan* and *rollo* are etymologically unrelated, I assume that their pragmatic functions stem from their semantic nature as approximators; this implies they represent a cycle involving formulative and quotative uses. In what follows, I conduct a microdiachronic study of *en plan* and *rollo* in the 21st century to elucidate whether and to what extent the two approximators coincide in developing their pragmatic functions.

16.2 Theoretical framework and methodology

16.2.1 Cyclicity and approximators

In broad terms, studies on cyclicity delve into linguistic change, extracting recurrent patterns from an item and a new one: ‘when items are renewed, the range of senses/functions of the new item is typically not exactly identical to that of the item it replaces, but rather overlaps with it’ (Hansen 2018a: 55). Hansen (2018a, 2018b) conceives a cycle as a sequence of semantic shifts (which we may call *shift-chains*): ‘[i]t refers to a type of a stepwise, recurrent and inherently directional evolution, which results in the renewal of linguistic markers’ (Hansen 2020b: 165); as this author states, ‘the idea of a cycle describes what linguists may perceive when studying evolutions that not infrequently have taken centuries to complete’ (Hansen 2020b: 166). Besides, dealing with cycles involves two levels of analysis: a content level, bearing on ‘a state-of-affairs in some real or imagined world that is referred to’, and a context level, ‘express[ing] speakers’ comments on the relations between described states-of-affairs and the discourse itself’ (Hansen 2008: 16).⁹

⁹ The distinction runs parallel to the semantics~pragmatics distinction, but the context level includes pragmatic phenomena regardless of whether pragmatics ‘is drawn in terms of (non-)truth-conditional or (non-)codedness in language’ (Hansen 2018a: 56).

According to [Hansen \(2014\)](#), an example of a cycle is as follows:

- (13) *IAM* (Latin) > *ja* (Old French) > *déjà* (Present-Day French)

The Latin form *IAM* conveyed a temporal-aspectual meaning ('as of now', 'already'), from which pragmatic-based scalar readings emerge. This temporal-aspectual reading became central in Old French *ja*, encompassing similar functions to its etymon; once displaced *ja* as a temporal form by the slightly modified *déjà*, this marked term undergoes similar context-level functions in contemporary French ([Hansen 2018b](#)). A different case of a cycle is as follows ([Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a](#)):

- (14) *QUAESO~ROGO* (Latin) > *chiedo~prego* (Italian)

The Latin terms *QUAESO* and *ROGO* specialized in expressing 'request' in polite contexts; similarly, the Italian terms *chiedo* ('I ask') and *prego* ('I pray') serve this request function as speech acts. Italian *chiedo* is etymologically related to *QUAESO*, while *prego* (currently equivalent to English 'please') is an etymologically unrelated term, which fulfils the same communicative purposes. Hence, cycles are twofold: in (13), a cognate formally changes according to shifts in its meaning in (14), a meaning specializes in current forms in a parallel way to an ancient distribution, not necessarily etymologically related.

[Hansen \(2018a, 2020b\)](#) distinguishes between semasiological cycles and onomasiological cycles, respectively. In semasiological cycles like (13), 'etymologically closely related forms, repeatedly develop similar context-level functions from a similar point of departure at the content-level' ([Hansen 2018a](#): 57). In onomasiological cycles like (14), on the other hand, an item develops context-level functions, akin to how unrelated forms developed them in older stages; '[a]n onomasiological cycle is defined by the (potentially repeated) replacement of markers used for a given context-level function by more recently emerged, and etymologically unrelated, items hailing from the same conceptual source at the content level' ([Hansen 2020b](#): 170).

Therefore, my analysis addresses an onomasiological cycle; *en plan* and *rollo* are etymologically unrelated, but both share in Spanish an approximator meaning, which presents formulative and quotative functions:

- (15) Approximator meaning > Formulative function > Quotative function
(CONTENT LEVEL) (CONTEXT LEVEL)

Accordingly, *en plan* serves as an approximator at the content level and as a formulative or quotative marker at the context level. Fully grammaticalized in the 20th century ([Borreguero Zuloaga 2018, 2020](#)), *en plan* acquires further pragmatic functions that persist up to the present century ([Figure 16.3](#)).

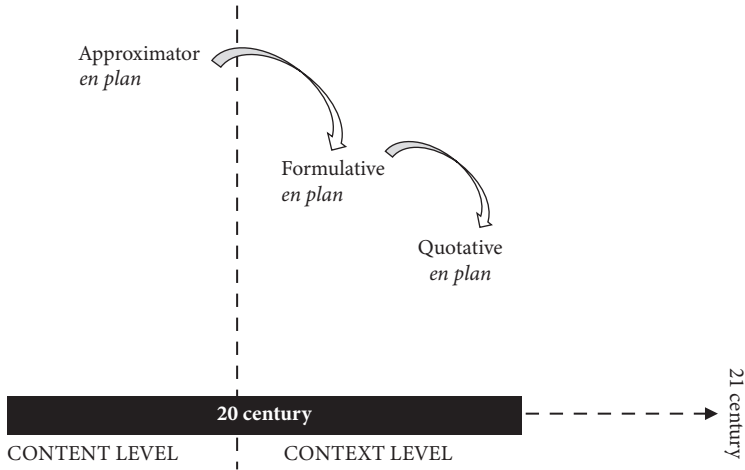


Figure 16.3 ‘En plan’: from approximator to formulative > quotative

Likewise, *rollo* works fully as an approximator at the content level in the late 20th century (Llopis Cardona and Jansegers 2023), and the same functions at the context level have been outlined (Mihatsch 2020); nevertheless, the path of pragmaticalization in (14) has not been explored for *rollo* in the 21st century (Figure 16.4).

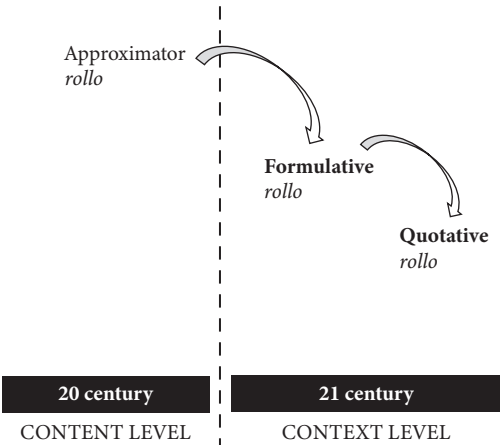


Figure 16.4 ‘Rollo’: from approximator to formulative > quotative

The significance of the onomasiological cycle lies in two forms undergoing a meaning change in the same manner, ‘a take-and-release strategy whereby an element acquires a new function while some element simultaneously loses an old one’ (Pons and Llopis 2020: 340). In this sense, it is possible to speak of a

renewal of *en plan* by *rollo*, since both forms—albeit synchronically coexisting—are staggered in time. Studying both forms in the 21st century from a cyclical approach offers information on how pragmatic functions of approximators are distributed. Then, I contend that the similarities of *en plan* and *rollo* suggest an ongoing change of a cyclical nature, supported by an analysis of how both approximators fulfil their different functions with similar frequency and significant proportions.

16.2.2 Discourse positions

As a tool for making the functional analysis of *en plan* and *rollo* more objective, I employ the Val.Es.Co. model of discourse segmentation based on units and positions (Val.Es.Co. Research Group 2014; Pons Bordería 2022). A discourse segmentation model is a system that allows for the distinction between pragmatically based units for the analysis of speech (Pons Bordería 2016, 2022). It has been applied to the historical study of discursive phenomena in several works (Pons Bordería and Estellés Arguedas 2009; Salameh Jiménez, Estellés Arguedas, and Pons Bordería 2018; Salameh 2020a, 2020b).

In this sense, the pragmatic functions of an approximator correlate with its position in speech. Compare the following examples of formulative and quotative *en plan*, respectively:¹⁰

- (16) (Discussing Sáez's dressing style)

D: ¿¿polos??↑

C: no polos no camisas así se las [ponen **en plan**] ceñidas que flipas porque Sáez↑/ iba marcando a→ tope [son muy especiales]

'D: Polo shirts??↑

C: no polo shirts but T-shirts they [wear them **like**] tight as fuck because Sáez↑/ used to show off very→ much [they are quite particular]

- (17) (B shares with A how he plays soccer in a laid-back manner)

B: ((noo)) juegas un poquillo **en plan** va ((me llega)) la bola le doy una y fuera↓ ¿¿sabes??→ pero→

'B: ((weeell)) you really play **like** ((I got)) the ball I give it a kick and I'm out↓ you know??→ but→'

Both cases of *en plan* seem to appear in the same position: namely, in the middle of the intervention uttered by the speaker. However, scope differences suggest two different positions:

¹⁰ Examples (16) and (17) were obtained from CORPES XXI: www.rae.es/banco-de-datos/corpes-xxi (12 June 2023).

(16') (Discussing Sáez's dressing style)

D: ¿¿polos??↑

C: no polos no camisas así se las [ponen **en plan**] ceñidas que flipas porque Sáez↑/ iba marcando a→ tope [son muy especiales]

'D: Polo shirts??↑

C: no polo shirts but T-shirts they [wear them **like**] tight as fuck because Sáez↑/ used to show off very→ much [they are quite particular]'

(17') (B shares with his friends how he plays soccer in a laid-back manner)

B: ((noo)) juegas un poquillo **en plan** va((me llega)) la bola le doy una y fuera↓ ¿¿sabes??→ pero→

'B: ((weeell)) you really play just **like** ((I got)) the ball I give it a kick and I'm out↓ you know??→ but→'

In (16), *en plan* appears in the middle of the utterance; as a formulative element, the whole utterance in which *en plan* appears is understood as its scope. In (17), *en plan* is in the initial position with respect to B's reported thought. The Val.Es.Co. model defines the scope of an item concerning the discourse segment in which it works. Such scope differences are conceived as distinct discourse units; thus, depending on its scope over a given unit or another, an approximator varies in its pragmatic functions.

For the purpose of this study, three discourse units are relevant, namely a speaker's intervention, the act or acts that constitute an intervention, and the subacts within an act:

- INTERVENTION: an intervention is the minimal interactive unit in the Val.Es.Co. model. It represents a speaker's contribution to the discourse, structurally delimited by the change of speaker (i.e. the interventions of B and C in previous examples).
- ACT: the act is the minimal communicative unit in the Val.Es.Co. model, understood as an utterance with its own propositional content and illocutionary force, and it is common for one intervention to contain more than one act. Once again, in example (16):

(16') C: #no polos no# #camisas así se las [ponen **en plan**] ceñidas que flipas porque Sáez↑/ iba marcando a→ tope# #[son muy especiales]#

C: #no polo shirts# #but T-shirts they [wear them **like**] tight as fuck because Sáez↑/ used to show off very→ much# #[they are quite particular]'#

- This intervention consists of three acts (indicated by hashtags). The first act involves a negative assertion, while the second act involves the argumentative counterpart; the third act constitutes a concluded opinion. In turn, the act can be composed of various subacts.

- SUBACT: the subact is the minimal informational unit in the Val.Es.Co. model, delimiting the central information of the act from the subordinate information. Thus, the act in (15') where *en plan* appears is composed of two subacts (indicated by curly braces):

(18) #{but T-shirts they [wear them **like**] tight as fuck} {because Sáez↑/ used to show off very→ much}#

These three units allow the determination of the scope of an approximator in spoken discourse and, in addition, reveal that *en plan* occurs in different positions from those observed at first sight: in (16), formulative *en plan* occupies the medial position of an act, while in (17), quotative *en plan* occupies the initial position. In short, the position of *en plan*—as well as of *rollo*—according to the discourse unit it appears in provides clues about pragmatic, context-level functions of approximators.

16.2.3 Data

This study uses data representing the uses of *en plan* and *rollo* in the 21st century. To build my corpus, I have drawn on the following databases:

- Spanish Royal Academy's corpora *CORPES XXI* (*Spanish Corpus of the 21st Century*), containing data from Peninsular and American Spanish spoken in the 21st century (I especially focus on informal interviews from 2000 to 2020).
- *CREA* (*Reference Corpus of Contemporary Spanish*), containing data from Peninsular and American Spanish spoken from 1975 to 2004 (especially semi-structured interviews from recorded socio-linguistic data).
- The *Corpus COLAM* (*Madrid Young Language Corpus*), containing spoken data from 2000 to 2016 (focusing on semi-structured interviews with teenage speakers from Madrid as a centre for socio-linguistic innovation).
- The *Val.Es.Co. 3.0 Corpus* (*Valencian Spoken Spanish*), containing spoken data from 2000 to 2020 (focusing on colloquial conversations).

Examples, ultimately, correspond to *en plan* and *rollo* within spoken genres with a high degree of informality (Koch and Oesterreicher 1985; Briz 2010; López-Serena and Borreguerro Zuloaga 2010), such as colloquial interviews and conversations (planned speeches or radio/television broadcasts have not been taken into account).¹¹ The primary focus is on young speakers (i.e. young age

¹¹ Regarding the methodological decision to exclude broadcasts, see Salameh Jiménez (2024) on informality/colloquialization in this genre.

groups between 13 and 25 years old), who mostly employ these forms for formulative and quotative purposes (Jørgensen 2009). Semantic, vagueness-denoting instances of *en plan* and *rollo* have been excluded from the analysis; the challenge lies in effectively documenting a significant amount of pragmatic instances of both approximators, so the chi-square test is applied to address the scarcity of data in Section 16.3.

Finally, all examples of *en plan* and *rollo* have been segmented using the Val.Es.Co. model. This methodology aids in objectifying the discussion on formulative and quotative uses according to structural parameters in Section 16.4.

16.3 Analysis

In this section, I present the distribution of pragmatic functions of *en plan* and *rollo* in the 21st century, respectively. Considering all the above-mentioned corpora, the collected data are shown in Table 16.1.

Table 16.1 Instances of ‘en plan’/‘rollo’
(absolute frequencies considering all corpora)

<i>en plan</i>	Formulative	166 (67.76%)	Total: 245
	Quotative	79 (32.24%)	
<i>rollo</i>	Formulative	39 (78.00%)	Total: 50
	Quotative	11 (22.00%)	

As seen in Table 16.1, the frequency of both approximators in spoken speech among young speakers is limited: the number of instances of *rollo* (50 instances) hardly accounts for 20 per cent of the total documented cases for *en plan* (245 instances), indicating that *rollo* is a more recent form, in line with assumptions in the literature (De la Torre García and Siebold 2020; Mihatsch 2020).

It is also noteworthy that *en plan* and *rollo* exhibit similar proportions of both pragmatic functions (formulative uses: 67.76 per cent for *en plan* and 78.00 per cent for *rollo*; quotative uses: 32.24 per cent and 20.00 per cent, respectively), implying a parallel behaviour of both approximators in the 21st century. In sum, their respective frequencies suggest that *en plan* is more advanced in terms of its pragmatization, which is in principle compatible with *rollo* being an incoming form.

16.3.1 *En plan* in the 21st century

The distribution of the functions of *en plan* from the year 2000 to 2020 is shown in Figure 16.5.

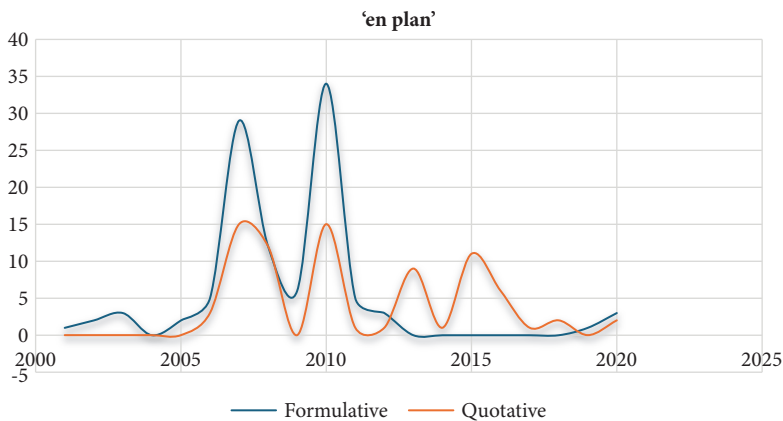


Figure 16.5 Twenty-first-century distribution of ‘en plan’ (absolute frequencies)

Figure 16.5 depicts a rough proportional correlation between both functions until 2010; from that year, the quotative function is predominant; additionally, formulative uses of *en plan* noticeably decline when quotative uses become regular in spoken language. This correlation has been tested for significance for both functions:

Table 16.2 Chi-square test for ‘en plan’

<i>en plan</i>	Formulative	Observed frequencies = 205 Expected frequencies = 185.68 CHI-SQUARE VALUE = 3.95 (p-value = 0.047)
	Quotative	Observed frequencies = 60 Expected frequencies = 79.32 CHI-SQUARE VALUE = 7.39 (p-value = 0.007)

According to the *p*-values derived from the null hypothesis probability distribution, the results of *en plan* are compelling for formulative (chi-square: 3.95, *p*-value: 0.047 at 95 per cent confidence) and quotative uses (chi-square: 7.39, *p*-value: 0.007 at 99 per cent confidence).¹² The low *p*-values imply that the

¹² The confidence level is calculated as $(1 - p\text{-value}) \times 100\%$. As the measure of reliability in statistical inference, it represents the probability that the observed results are not due to random chance.

correlation observed in both functions is not a random connection, delving into the switch of *en plan* from a formulative function to a quotative use.

16.3.2 *Rollo* in the 21st century

Regarding the pragmatic functions of *rollo*, the distribution from 2000 to 2020 does not appear as regularly as in *en plan* (Figure 16.6).

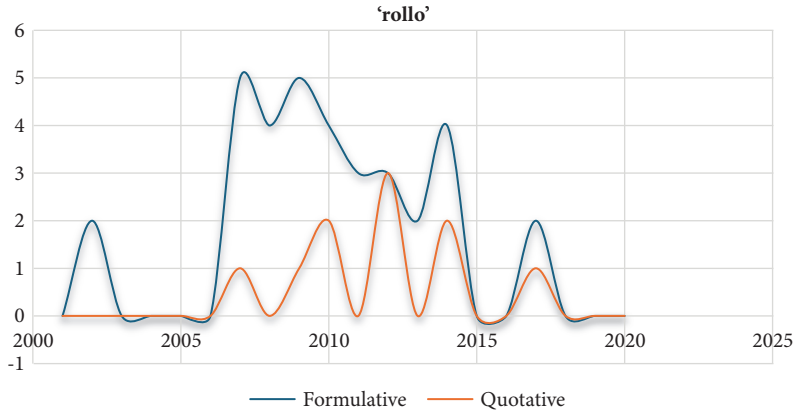


Figure 16.6 Twenty-first-century distribution of ‘rollo’ (absolute frequencies)

Figure 16.6 must be interpreted based according to two main intervals. From 2005 to 2015, a clear predominance of formulative *rollo* is observed, declining inversely proportional to the increase in quotative uses from 2009 to 2013. In the second period (2015–2020), both uses are balanced: the curve of formulative uses—albeit higher—runs parallel to that of quotative uses. At first sight, there is no graphic regularity between both functions in Figure 16.6, but the correlation between them is nonetheless significant (see Table 16.3).

Table 16.3 Chi-square test for ‘rollo’

<i>rollo</i>	Formulative	Observed frequencies = 39 Expected frequencies = 20.99 CHI-SQUARE VALUE = 13.43 (<i>p</i>-value < 0.001)
	Quotative	Observed frequencies = 11 Expected frequencies = 29.01 CHI-SQUARE VALUE = 6.87 (<i>p</i>-value = 0.009)

Like in the case of *en plan* (Table 16.2), the low *p*-values show a significant correlation between the reduction of formulative uses and the emergence of

quotative ones. These *p*-values for *rollo* are even more relevant than those for *en plan* (*p*-value 0.001 at 99.95 per cent confidence for formulative *rollo*, and *p*-value 0.006 at 99.55 per cent confidence for quotative *rollo*).

The difference in the degrees of significance between both approximators does not permit the establishment of an association between the forms *en plan* and *rollo*; though, in each approximator separately, the conducted chi-square tests show that the occurrence of formulation and quotation functions is not independent, providing evidence (at least in my dataset) of a relationship between the two functions during the 21st century. Thus, the correlation between both functions in each approximator is significant: *rollo* is the least frequently documented form; besides, formulative and quotative uses of *rollo* per year become quantitatively balanced in time from 2015 onwards, whereas, in *en plan*, this balanced distribution of both functions occurs since the early 21st century—indeed, from 2015 onwards, the pragmaticalization of quotative uses is more pronounced than that of the formulative ones.

16.4 Discussion: a structural cycle for a semantic/pragmatic cycle?

The analysis shows an association between formulative and quotative functions with *en plan*, as well as with *rollo*. Both forms are etymologically unrelated and point to an onomasiological cycle, starting from an approximator meaning and resulting in further pragmatic functions. Formulative and quotative uses in a cline have also been identified in approximators of other languages typologically unrelated to Spanish, especially in Norwegian *liksom* and *sånn* (*der*) (Hasund, Opsahl, and Svennevig 2012). These authors have claimed that some Norwegian approximators are used as fillers, acquiring a quotative function in emphatic contexts that report reinforced information to hearers.

En plan and *rollo* present a similar path of pragmaticalization, from content-level ‘approximator’ to context-level ‘formulative’ > ‘quotative’. In this chapter, I contribute to the study of this semantic/pragmatic evolution by focusing on their discourse positions and elucidating structural constraints that affect both forms.

At the content level, the scope of approximators *en plan* and *rollo* is over sentence constituents:

- (19) (Talking about the photos from a trip posted on Instagram)
 A: [pues las fotos te han cun[dido un mes(ENTRE RISAS)]
 B: [noo **en plan** cuatro- cuatro días pero de verdad eh]/ [o sea↓]
 A: [so you have been posting fotos [for a month(LAUGHING)]
 B: [not really **approximately** for- for four days really huh]/ [so↓]

In an example like (19), *en plan* is perfectly interchangeable with *rollo* and constitutes a case of an approximator denoting a vague reading of the utterance in B's response. This vague reading usually affects a single constituent in the sentence:

- (20) (Talking about New Year's Eve dinner)
 y después el paté de- de setas que está buenísimo/ siempre comemos así
en plan picoteo/ después las uvas/ el café nunca nos da tiempo a tomarlo
 'and then the- the mushroom pâté which is delicious/ we always eat like
 this **kind of** snack/ afterward the grapes/ we never have time for coffee'

Some authors have referred to this use as a modalizer (Casanova Martínez 2020); however, such uses are irrelevant from a pragmatic point of view: *en plan* works at the content level in (20)—as well as in (19)—since the vague reading is constrained to the focalized item ('kind of snacking').

Thus, *en plan* and *rollo*, in their core meaning, as approximators, present a syntax-dependent position. By contrast, formulative uses of *en plan* and *rollo* have greater positional freedom. For instance:

- (21) B: #{{no a ver yo creo pero Juli yo creo que-}}/ {{yo **en plan**-} yo creo que
 ENTIENDO **en plan**- ell- como- la actitud de la gente} {porque era un
 pocoo **en plan**- como que [tú estás en primero estás superinseguro]}# #{{no
 sabes cómo van}}#
 'B: #{{no see I think but Juli I think-}}/ {I think [**like**-] I think it's I
 UNDERSTAND **like**- they just- guys' attitude} {because it was a little bit
like- as if [you were in the first course and you're feeling really unsure]}#
 #{{you don't know how everything works-}}#

In my database, formulative uses of approximators are abundantly documented in the medial position of utterances. They share this discourse position with other formulative markers:

- (22) #{{es un parque precioso}} {¡eh!}# #{{está- está muy bien hombre ganó el-
rollo ganó **me refiero** ganó en un sentido perdió en otro} {porque a mí me
 quitaron la vista}}# #{{pero sí está ahora mucho más poblado claro}}# #{{y y
 ahora aquí ya no encuentras aparcamiento}} {o sea ya es eeh}#
 #{{'it's a beautiful park}} {huh!}# #{{it- it's very nice man it improve- **I mean**
 it improved **I mean** it improved in some sense but lost in another}
 {because they took away my views but yes now it's very much populated of
 course}}# #{{and and now you can't find parking here anymore}} {**I mean** it's
 already umm'}#

Less common, but equally possible, is the initial position in formulative uses:

- (23) # { claro } { porque a mí me gusta/ } { a mí lo que más me interesa/ aparte de los monumentos/ de- de- de ver mmm las ciudades/ los- } # # { **rollo** a mí lo que me interesa/ lo que más me interesa realmente de los viajes es la gente } #
 # { 'sure' } { because I do like/ } { what I mostly like/ besides the monuments/ to- to- to see mm in a city/ the- } # # { **like** I'm interested/ I'm mostly interested in people when I'm travelling' } #

In (23), the speaker explains what he likes most about travelling. From a discourse segmentation perspective, (23) consists of a first act, with various subacts containing fragmented information, and a second act that concludes the intervention by providing the central information. This second act is led by *rollo*, placed in initial position. Formulative *rollo* can also have a broader scope over the whole intervention:

- (24) C: [pero ¿qué obsesión] tienes con los bolsos y [los zapatos!?(ENTRE RISAS)] [(RISAS)] [es que(ENTRE RISAS)] [(RISAS)]
 D: [((eh))]
 C: [((sí que hay)) vestidos ((pero que))]
 D: [((qué (())))]
 D: [(RISAS)]
 A: **ro**[llo # {irme dee ((compras)) } { ((y tal)) }] #
 C: [jolin pues] te ARRUIÑARÍAS [porque si todo]/ [sí]
 'C: [but what's your obsession] with bags and [shoes!?(LAUGHING)] [it really(LAUGHING)] [(LAUGHTER)]'
 D: [((uhm))]
 C: [((there're)) dresses ((but what a))]
 D: [((what (())))]
 A: **I** [**mean** # {I can go ((shopping)) } { ((and so)) }] #
 C: [gosh so] you'd RUIN YOURSELF [if everything]/ [yes]

In the initial position of an intervention, the formulative function of *rollo* returns to a previous topic ('Speaker A's obsession with shopping' expressed by Speaker C) and allows the speaker to continue ('I can go shopping').

As reflected in the position-scope possibilities involved by *en plan* and *rollo*, formulative approximators respond to the needs of discourse construction during the flow of speech. This positional flexibility changes entirely when an approximator acquires a quotative function:

- (25) B: #sí sí sí mis compañeros
 A: #no te entra como)#
 B: de piso una vez me tuvieron que cortar)# #***en plan*** oye Clara va /llevas diez horas aquí metida/} {hay vida/más allá de/de esta caja cuadrada}#
 A: #ya)#
 B: #yes yes yes my roomies
 A: #don't you feel like-?)#
 B: once my roomies had to stop me)# #***like*** hey Clara come on you were here for ten hours/ there's a life / beyond / beyond this square box)#
 A: #right)#

As in (25), the only position documented for quotative uses is the initial position of an act.¹³ In contrast to formulative examples in (20)–(23), quotative approximators cannot occur within the reported information over which they have scope; otherwise, they would be necessarily understood as formulative material:

- (25') ??B: de piso una vez me tuvieron que cortar)# #oye Clara va /***en plan*** llevas diez horas aquí metida/} {hay vida/más allá de/de esta caja cuadrada}#
 A: #ya)#
 ??B: once my roomies had to stop me)# #hey Clara come on you were ***like*** here for ten hours/ there's a life / beyond / beyond this squared box)#
 A: #right)#

In conclusion, quotative uses of approximators are structurally constrained to the initial position of reported discourse, while formulative uses may appear wherever filler requirements arise.

16.5 Conclusions

Formulative and quotative uses represent two pragmatic functions that cyclically manifest themselves across *en plan* and *rollo*. These forms are not etymologically related, but both approximators suggest a pattern from 'formulative' to 'quotative'. The data point to an advanced process of pragmaticalization for *en plan* (once quotative uses are documented, they significantly increase over the formulative ones);

¹³ Notice that (24) is an example obtained from *CORPES XXI*, which does not transcribe overlapped speech (clearly perceived in the audio file). Speaker B carries out a single intervention: the first act starts with 'yes' and ends with 'stop me'. Hence, the first act refers to a wholly communicative utterance (#yes yes yes my roomies once my roomies had to stop me;#), distinguished from the reported-speech act introduced by *en plan*.

as for *rollo*, the data suggest that this form is the most recent, in addition to a correlation between both functions from 2015 onwards, later than in *en plan* (from 2005 onwards). Although it is not yet confirmed whether quotative uses are predominant over formulative ones in *rollo*, it is possible to propose that this approximator participates in an onomasiological cycle with *en plan*, inasmuch both forms develop identical pragmatic functions—in line with Hansen's (2018a: 64) idea that 'onomasiology starts with a particular meaning or function and aims to discover what specific forms can express that meaning or function in a given language'.

A path of pragmaticalization (which will need further exploration in future work) takes shape here (Figure 16.7).

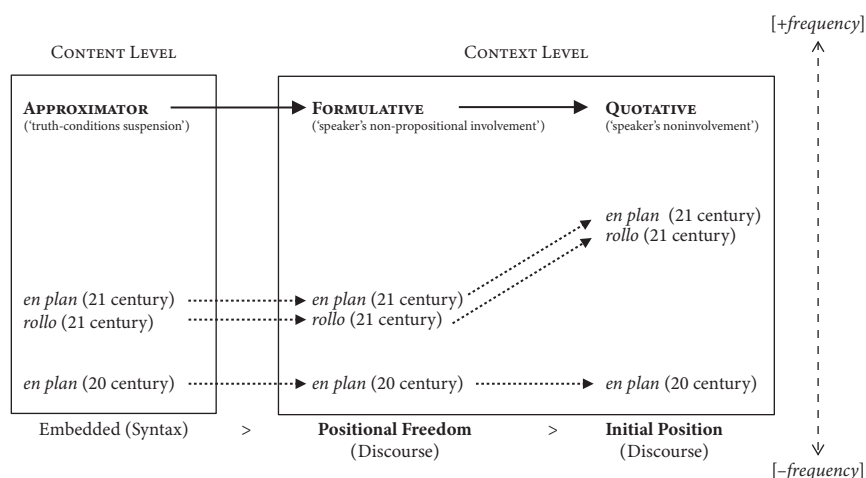


Figure 16.7 A path of pragmaticalization proposal

At the content level, approximators suspend the truth-conditions of the sentence in which they appear. From this truth-condition suspension, a pragmatically inferred modal reading emerges: approximators help speakers to express non-propositional involvement, generating formulative uses that enhance the discursive flow. In a subsequent stage of pragmaticalization, the filler function marks the beginning of reported speech, implying the speaker's non-involvement and giving rise to quotative uses.

The positional freedom which characterizes the formulative uses contrasts with the specialization of the quotative ones in initial position with respect to reported speech. That indicates both functions are constrained in two ways: on the one hand, the semantically vague starting point of *en plan* and *rollo*, and on the other hand, the discourse position structure. Hence, the discourse position of approximators sheds light on structural restrictions of pragmatic functions and serves as a complementary formal tool to study onomasiological cyclicity.

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Weakening of pragmatic force and socio-cultural factors

The pragmaticalization cycle of Italian grammatical deference

Chiara Ghezzi

17.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on cyclical patterns of pragmatic change and on how communicative, cognitive, and socio-cultural factors may contribute to their unfolding. Specifically, it considers the pragmatic cycle that characterizes the Italian system of grammatical deference from the 16th to the 20th century.

Linguistic cycles can be defined as the recursive renewal of some type of linguistic markers (Hansen 2020b: 167). In the outcome of a cyclical change, ‘an already existing older element is replaced by a more recently emerged synonymous or near-synonymous item, which, in turn, may itself be replaced by yet another element at a later stage’ (Detges 2020: 290). These changes are distinguished from linear developments, as in the latter the input of a change may disappear from the language as, for instance, in the elimination of declensions in the passage from Latin to Romance languages. The assumption that will be discussed here is that language changes at the pragmatic level may be subject to cyclical change.

Cycles of pragmaticalization can be defined as language changes of a pragmatic nature where the content-level source item of a context-level (i.e. pragmatic) marker is replaced by a new item which becomes the source of the context-level function (Hansen 2014: 280; cf. Hansen 2020b: 168). Thus, meanings are not ‘prepackaged container-like entities’ but ‘can be contextually enriched when used in actual communication, thereby yielding usages, especially by inference’ (Detges 2010: 196).

The main point made in this chapter is that this type of change characterizes the development of the Italian system of grammatical deference as it emerges in plays written between the 16th and 20th centuries.

Grammatical deference implies processes of honorification; that is, the co-optation of elements operating at the level of grammar, such as personal pronouns

(including oblique and clitic variants), possessive adjectives, and verb agreements, for ‘social’ work at the level of pragmatics in what has been defined as the system of ‘social deixis’ (Renzi 1993). In (1), from a contemporary Italian comedy, although reference would suggest the use of the second-person singular to address the interlocutor, the speaker uses the polite third-person singular feminine, which is still the canonical V form in the Italian system of grammatical deference.

- (1) *Ersilia: Anche lei Virgilio, non da un attimo di pace, e la radio, il giornale, la televisione, oh che non gli riesce di stare un momento tranquillo?* (Giunti, *A ciascuno il suo*, I, 4)

‘You.3FSG too, Virgil, (you.3FSG) don’t.3SG give a moment’s peace, and the radio, the newspaper, the television, oh (why) can’t.3SG you.DAT.3MSG be quiet for a while?’

This honorification process is a force (or ‘drift’ in Sapir’s words¹) that is ubiquitous in Indo-European (IE) languages, to the point that it has been considered a pan-IE ‘slant’ phenomenon (cf. Joseph 1987: 274). However, in some IE languages, among them Italian, this pragmatic development, which is linear in essence, is scattered with pragmatic cycles, whose unfolding provides glimpses on how cyclical changes develop and on the factors that promote language change at the level of pragmatics. Specifically, they suggest hypotheses about the connection between socio-cultural, communicative, and cognitive factors. As a matter of fact, a single grammatical distinction between a T form and a V form corresponds to a complex set of pragmatic rules and social contexts determining the choice between the two (Helmbrecht 2013). Grammatical deference is the linguistic icon of an attitude of deference towards the interlocutor, which is often institutionalized through politeness systems and is thus deeply imbued with ideologies on language use, which have their roots in socio-cultural changes (Ghezzi 2021). It is therefore relevant to consider how social factors, which operate in actual communicative contexts and are driven by cognitive operations, interact with more systemic factors in triggering the development of a cycle. As will be discussed in this chapter, these extra-systemic factors had direct (even though gradually instantiated) consequences for the morphology of Italian and they triggered cognitive processes, such as routinization, that have long been assumed to take part in language change in crucial ways.

The Italian system of grammatical deference embarked on a pragmaticalization cycle that resulted in a function–form reconfiguration of the linguistic means used to express deference at the V pole. This implied first a pragmatic enrichment of the second plural V form (*voi*), its subsequent pragmatic weakening, and then its

¹ Sapir (1949: 23) defines these ‘drifts’ as ‘the very slow but powerful unconscious changes in certain directions which seem to be implicit in the phonemic systems and morphologies of the languages themselves.’

substitution by the third-person feminine singular (*lei*), which thus underwent pragmatic enrichment. This change had an essential pragmatic nature as it pertained to the system of social deixis, where the content-level source item (*voi*) of a context-level marker (i.e. the codification of grammatical deference) was replaced by a new item (*lei*), which became the source of the context-level function. This change arguably represents an instance of an onomasiological cycle, as the new V form (*lei*) has the same function as the one that is substituted (*voi*). Yet, as will be discussed in this chapter, the parameters and the domain of use of the V form, as such, have changed considerably over the centuries, also in connection with changing rules and conventions for polite behaviour, and thus do not completely overlap with the original ones.

Moving from these premises, this chapter analyses the development of the Italian system of grammatical deference with the objective, firstly, of discussing why this type of development has a cyclical nature and what its properties are, and secondly, of considering, on the one hand, the systemic forces that favour these changes, and on the other hand the factors that may propel them in specific contexts; that is, the ways in which the socio-cultural factors involved can be related to communicative and cognitive factors.

This chapter is structured as follows. In [Section 17.2](#) the forces at play in the development of grammatical deference in the context of IE languages are considered; in [Section 17.3](#) the factors in the Italian context which may have played a role in the Italian pragmatic cycle are discussed. [Section 17.4](#) describes the data analysis, while in [Section 17.5](#) some conclusions are drawn.

17.2 Grammatical deference and IE languages

Lexical deference exists universally, being implicit in basic systems such as address terms (e.g. *Sir* vs. *my boy* vs. *buddy*), whereas grammatical deference does not. From a strictly linguistic perspective, grammatical deference, or honorification ([Agha 1994](#)), implies the replacement of a morphological device, coded for reference to the subject or object, with forms that apply to another person category.

Grammatical deference has been considered a pan-IE phenomenon as all IE languages, at some point in their histories, share a shift of paradigm-internal values and value relations to codify honorific meaning ([Joseph 1987](#): 259). This implies making use of a cluster of grammatical resources (e.g. personal pronouns, possessive adjectives, and verb agreement) to show deference (or respect) towards interlocutors.

IE languages display great variation in the grammatical resources employed to codify grammatical deference, for instance Fr. *vous* (2PL), It. *lei* (3FSG), Ger. *Sie* (3PL). Moreover, if most languages express grammatical deference through deictic forms (i.e. *you*.2PL for *you*.2SG, but also *we* for *I*, although less common), some

languages make use of the anaphoric third person, as is the case with Italian *lei* '3FSG' and with the Spanish pronoun *usted*, originally from the honorific NP *Vuestra Merced* 'Your Mercy'. Other languages have a third-person deference pronoun parallel to the second-person system, such as Romanian *dumnealui* (and variants), or have more complex systems, like Hindi, which has a deferential *vah* + 3SG verb and a super-deferential *ve* + 3PL verb (Joseph 1987: 260).

Joseph (1987: 262–263) identifies four basic strategies that IE languages use to codify grammatical deference, which include the absence of morphologized deference (type 1), for example, Latin, as well as many other ancient languages; second-person plural as deferent (type 2), for example, Late Latin and Modern French; third person as deferent (type 3), the focus of this chapter, which includes both third-person singular grammatical deference, for example, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and German up to the 18th century, and third-person plural grammatical deference in German, Norwegian, or Danish; and finally a mixed system (type 4). The different types are synthesized in Table 17.1 from Joseph (1987: 262–263).

Interestingly, pluralization is the first and basic mechanism of deference that IE languages develop, so that languages that develop other devices in the course of their histories do so only after passing through the pluralization stage. This is the case with Italian, Spanish, and German, which moved from a bipartite system with T–V distinction, where the second plural form was the deferent form, to a tripartite stage where two V forms coexisted for some time (for Italian, second plural coexisted with third singular feminine), to return to a bipartite system where the original V form was substituted by an incipient new form (i.e. *voi* was substituted by *lei* in Italian).

The case of German is a model in this regard, as the first attestations of the use of second plural as deferent are found in the Old High German period around the ninth century. Such uses became more and more regular in the Middle High German period. However, this originally binary system expanded to a ternary system in the 17th century through the introduction of a super-polite third singular as deferent. Around the 18th century, the paradigm of personal pronouns distinguished four levels of politeness, as the third plural as deferent began to be used as a super-polite form of address, when the degree of respect expressed by *er/sie* (<3SGM/F) diminished. This system began to collapse by the middle of the 19th century, resulting in the contemporary binary opposition between *du* (T) and *Sie* (V) (Helmbrecht 2014: 318–319).

Systems with binary distinctions are much more common cross-linguistically than systems with multiple distinctions, although in the IE family these are attested particularly in the Indo-Aryan branch or in Romanian and Lithuanian, within European languages (Helmbrecht 2013).

These processes show the interconnection of the grammatical categories of person and number in the process of honorification. Both are among the most

Table 17.1 Types of grammatical deference

Type 1 no morphologized deference	Type 2 2p as deferent	Type 3 3 as deferent	Type 4 mixed systems
Archaic IE tongues (pre-Christian era): for example, Latin, Old Prussian, Old Church Slavic, Old English, Old Danish, Old Irish, Oscan-Umbrian, Old Armenian, Classical Greek, Sanskrit, Old Persian	(2a) 2p > 2p/2s-deferent: for example, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, Russian; Albanian; Swedish; Breton, Scots Gaelic; Late Latin, Medieval Spanish, Medieval Italian, French; Modern Greek; Western Middle Iranian, Modern Persian	(3a) 3s > 3s/2s-deferent; 3p > 3p/2p: Spanish of W. Andalucia, Canary Islands, America (non- <i>voseo</i> regions) <i>usted</i> , <i>ustedes</i>	(4a) 2s (~ 3s) (both with special deference pronoun) > 2-deferent: Dutch
Modern dialects, for example, in Italy (Abruzzo, Marche, Umbria, the Sabine mountains, Puglia, parts of Campania and Calabria; Aromanian and sub Danubian Daco-Romanian colonial dialects)	(2b) 2p > 2p/2s-deferent > for example, English <i>you</i>	(3b) 3s > 3s/2s-deferent; 3p > 3p/2p-deferent: Polish, Italian, German to mid-18th century, Spanish of Spain (except W. Andalucia, Canary Islands), Continental Portuguese	(4b) 2p > 2p/2s-deferent; 3p > 2-superdeferent: Hindi
	(2c) 2p > 2-deferent; 2-dual > 2p (non-deferent): Icelandic	(3c) 3p > 3p/2-deferent: German and W. Yiddish, Danish and Norwegian	(4c) 2p > 2p/2s-deferent > 2 > 2p/2s-superdeferent; 3s > 3s/2s-deferent; 3p > 3p/2p-deferent: Judeo-Spanish; Golden Age Spanish
	(2d) 2s (with special deference pronoun) > 2s-deferent 2p (with special deference pronoun) > 2p-deferent/2s-superdeferent: Daco-Romanian		(4e) 2p > 2p/2s-deferent > 2s-deferent > 2s-non-deferent; 3s > 3s/2s-deferent; 3p > 3p/2p: Spanish of America (<i>voseo</i> regions)
	(2e) p > 2p; 2p (with special deference pronoun) > 2s-deferent: Frisian		(4d) 3s > 3s/2s; 3p > 3p/2p; 2p > 2s-superdeferent: Brazilian Portuguese

important categories of language and are intimately connected: for instance, the development of plurals starts from the first person and spreads to second and third, followed by nouns designating people, animate nouns, and objects. Moreover, the development of the plural is dependent on the crystallization of the singular, which, in turn, is strictly correlated to the deictic nature of the word (Forcheimer 1953: 11–19). Pronouns, generally, lead the vanguard of person categories because of their essentially deictic nature and relational structure. They include both the *origo* pole and the referential target, which reflect the cognitive representation of the speech event in a dyadic conversation (Helmbrecht 2003: 199).

It has been widely stressed how the honorification of pronouns metaphorically codifies hierarchy (deferential uses) and distance or formality (reverential uses)² (Agha 1994; cf. McCready 2019). Both second plural for second singular and third person for second person are linguistic strategies based on discourse-referential values of the grammatical categories of number and person. In the shift from plural meaning to singular usage, the effect is to make addressees count for ‘more than one social individual’ for merits, prestige, and authority; that is, to accrue to their persona the social weight of many (Serrianni 1997: 185). The movement from second singular to second plural deference ‘dilates’ the person category when somehow it has become uncomfortable because it is too confining (*pluralis maiestatis*) or too exposing (*pluralis modestiae*) (Benveniste 1946: 11–12). In the shift from second-person usage—where individuals are indexed in the speech situation—to the realm of anaphora of the third person—where an already established entity is understood as the referent of the substitute—the effect is to make addressees ‘larger than life’ by taking away their individual personhood as if it were too daring to directly address them (Silverstein 1976: 39). This shift is not a real replacement as third singular is one of the conceptual components of second plural its less definite component, considering that the plural imposes the presupposition that the entity is a sum of other entities (one entity and other(s) present in the interaction) (Bates and McKenzie 2021: 5). Joseph (1987: 272) considers this a movement of synecdoche whereby third singular, realized linguistically in place of all other components of second singular, is often marked lexically by an overt synecdochic reference to the addressee: for example, *your honour*, *your lordship*, *your mercy*, *your majesty* (i.e. addressing one aspect or quality of the person in lieu of the person as a whole). Therefore, the earlier second plural-as-second singular deferent is reanalysed as second singular, the person of the addressee, plus third singular, his/her power.

² The adjectives reverential and deferential are not used here as synonyms, although the overlap between these two notions is somehow difficult to avoid. Reverence implies profound respect mingled with love, devotion, or awe, while deference has been defined as ‘the expression of respect for and social distance from people of higher status, where status is assumed to be fixed prior to the relationship [...] a key presumption underlying *deference* is that some persons are more highly ranked on some kind of hierarchical scale than others’ (Haugh 2010: 271). Thus, deference is asymmetrical and vertical in essence, while reverence can also be used symmetrically as it implies respect as social power, as social rules or norms, but also as caring, or as equality and accepting differences (Haugh 2010: 280).

The deferential use of plural for singular is best attested in some languages within the Latin-Romance branch, beginning with Latin documents of the early Christian era (Maley 1974; Molinelli 2018); however, those other languages which have passed beyond the pluralization stage have done so by first creating lexical alternatives to plural morphological deference, then morphologizing these alternatives as third singular pronouns. The end point of the cycle is when the singular-to-plural change repeats itself, leaving third plural as the second singular deferent form, as in German today. It is possible to schematize the cycle as in Figure 17.1.

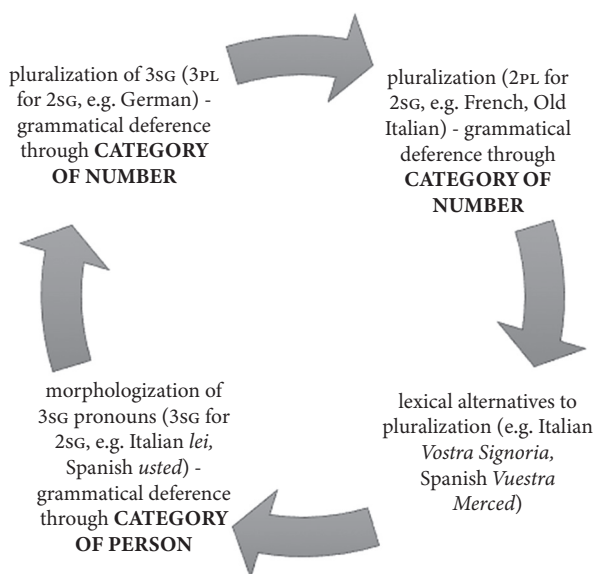


Figure 17.1 Person and number as means of grammatical deference

The development of grammatical deference itself, within IE languages, was connected with the heightened morphological relevance of the category of person (Lakoff 1972). Joseph (1987) puts forward the hypothesis that this innovation probably developed across the IE family after the language communities ceased to be in steady, large-scale contact, so that it can be considered a ‘slant’ present in their common structural heritage; that is, the totality of structural proclivities which predispose a language towards accepting and generalizing certain innovations made by speakers but not others (Joseph 1987: 265). In this perspective, the rise of grammatical deference can be connected in crucial ways with the much-investigated slant phenomena in IE languages (e.g. the development of periphrastic auxiliaries, appositions, etc.), which all relate to the movement from synthesis towards analysis; that is, changes in the direction of greater segmentation and independence of the word (Lakoff 1972: 174–179).

For honorification, Joseph's hypothesis is that what was relevant was the *mise en relief* that a feature underwent, concomitant with its segmentalization. Joseph (1987: 267) exemplifies this change, and its connection with segmentalization, by examples (2) and (3). In (2a) the Latin verbal forms carry information on tense, mood, aspect, and voice, in addition to the person of the subject, conveyed by the grammatical morpheme attached to the root. Instead, in (2b) the French pronoun *je* has no expressive function other than person, while the first-person subject is expressed by no sign other than *je*, thus elevating the form to the status of a word (although phonologically cliticized to the verb). Thus, it is possible to assume that subject-person information is treated at a higher order in French than in Latin.

(2) (a) Latin	vs. (b) French
<i>porto</i> 'I carry' (indicative)	<i>je porte</i> 'I carry' (indicative and subjunctive)
<i>portam</i> 'I carry' (subjunctive)	
<i>portavi</i> 'I have carried'	<i>j'ai porté</i> 'I have carried'
	(Joseph 1987: 267)

Similarly, in (3) the person inflection (Latin -s, Italian -i) has moved in (3b) closer to the verb stem; that is, just before it in Italian or separated by the past perfect inflection in Latin. As is suggested in (Bybee 1985a, b), the proximity of an inflectional category to the verb stem is directly proportional to the category's semantic relevance. Moreover, the shift of the person morpheme to an auxiliary, preceding the verb-semantic root, accomplishes a topicalization of person information (Joseph 1987: 268), while the spreading of syntactic-semantic information over two separate words allows additional information to be conveyed, as is the case for gender.

(3) (a) Latin	vs. (b) Italian
<i>veneras</i> 'you had come'	<i>eri venuto</i> '(you) had.2sg come.M' (Joseph 1987: 268)
	<i>eri venuta</i> '(you) had.2sg come.F'

Moving from these developments, it is possible to synthesize some elements. The increase in relevance of person creates a linear drift of changes, including the development of grammatical deference, as it becomes easier to charge person with further distinctions. When the development of grammatical deference takes place, the first and most basic mechanism of deference is pluralization (e.g. Late Lat. *vos*), but from this stage some languages develop other means that substitute pluralization in cyclical changes (e.g. Italian, Spanish, and German). In other words, the linear slant development of honorification triggers cyclic changes in some languages. The next sections of this chapter will be devoted to considering the

socio-cultural, communicative, and cognitive factors that in the specific context of Italian had a role in such types of cyclical change.

17.3 The Italian grammatical deference cycle and its socio-cultural context

The development of the Italian grammatical deference system, and more generally of its address system, is extremely well documented (see, among others, [Niculescu 1974](#) and [Molinelli 2015, 2018, 2019](#) for detailed overviews). The Old Italian pronominal system includes a T form (*tu* ‘you.2SG’) and a V form (*voi* ‘you.2PL’). However, progressively a second V form begins to be used (*ella/lei* ‘she.NOM/ACC’). The introduction of a new V form, which syntactically requires a third-person feminine verb agreement, is triggered by extensive use of honorific titles, typically noun phrases with a feminine abstract noun as head and a second plural possessive adjective as modifier (e.g. *Vostra Signoria* ‘Your.F Lordship.F’) ([Molinelli 2019](#): 59–60; see §2).

In texts of the 13th and 14th centuries, only the nominal form is used with second-person plural or third-person singular verb agreement. However, from the second half of the 15th century, the nominal form can already be found in co-occurrence with an anaphoric third-person feminine pronoun (*ella* ‘she.NOM’ or *lei* ‘she.ACC’, *quella* ‘that.FSG’, *questa* ‘this.FSG’). Starting from texts of the 17th century, two pronominal V forms coexist—that is, second plural *voi* (V1) and/or third-person feminine *ella/lei* (V2)—which can be used without an explicit reference to a previous feminine noun phrase ([Niculescu 1974](#): 97–99; [Molinelli 2018](#): 63–65). At the beginning of the 20th century, the ‘standard’ system of pronouns only includes the T form *tu* and one V form (*lei*); *voi* remains as a substandard V form in central and southern varieties ([Serianni 1997](#): 187–188).³

The development of the new V form *lei* is closely connected to the frequency of use of honorifics. [Molinelli \(2018: 58–62\)](#) shows that honorifics date back to Latin already in the third century AD (e.g. *Vestra Excellentia* ‘Your Excellency’, *Maiestas* ‘Your Majesty’, etc.). In 13th-century Italian, their use is codified in normative treaties in Latin and model letters in vernacular Italian, while in the 14th and 15th centuries their semantic field progressively broadens to reach its climax in the 18th century, but then progressively decreases in the following centuries ([Brunet 2003](#): 26; [Molinelli 2019](#): 58–66).

Grammatical deference maps social relations, which can be represented onto a metaphoric bidimensional space as rooted in vertical (power) and horizontal

³ However, a recent study shows that this distribution is far from uniform, as the status as well as the vitality of *voi* vary greatly from city to city, even within the same administrative region (see [Bresin 2021](#)).

(social distance) semantic dimensions (Pérez Hernández 1999). Power relations imply vertical and ordinal rank distinctions in a prestige order in some kind of hierarchy. Thus, they are essentially non-reciprocal, based on 'physical strength, wealth, age, sex, role in the church, the state, the army or within the family' (Brown and Gilman 1960: 255). Distance relations relate to horizontal nominal distinctions rooted in perceived similarities and differences between interlocutors. Therefore, they are reciprocal relations, which are based on the degree of contact between interlocutors (informal and intimate vs. formal relations), on the length of contact (occasional vs. frequent relations), and on their attitude (associative/respectful vs. dissociative/disrespectful) (Spencer-Oatey 1996: 17–18).

Both these dimensions bring with them a series of 'social' indexicalities as they index multiple dimensions of the social context, which are used by speakers to position themselves, their interlocutors, and their relationships, and to define the setting of interaction and their role within it. For instance, the non-reciprocal dimension of power translates into a deferential linguistic style towards the social superior, which implies the speakers' refinement, through an ability to efface emotion, sensitivity to the stability of others, and pragmatic delicacy (Irvine 1992: 256). The studies on the interrelations between these dimensions show that, together with actual forms of address, they acquire or lose prominence over time, also in connection with socio-cultural changes in practices of rapport management and, consequently, ideologies of language use, which underlie both social and linguistic behaviour.

From a socio-cultural point of view, some developments that characterize the Italian peninsula, from the 16th to the 20th century, can be synthesized into some pivotal points (Ghezzi 2021; Fedriani and Ghezzi 2025).

First, from the 16th century, a new conduct code based on courtly behaviour progressively gains influence. It is a social behaviour which in Italy is deeply influenced by Spanish ceremonial etiquette, introduced due to the Spanish rule. It is a code based on the art of *sprezzatura* ('effortless mastery') (Jucker 2020: 15), a strategic type of politeness 'built on the intentional conglomerate of education, wit, tact and a sense of good communication' (Held 2010: 199). This system is governed by complex and rigidly established rules for polite conduct, which include a series of *precedenze*, lit. 'precedencies', reflecting the smallest differences in social rank. These *precedenze* are expressed through a series of *cerimonie*, lit. 'ceremonies' or 'pleasantries', that imply a fixed and mandatory protocol for any situation of social life.

What counts as polite depends on the speaker's exact social positioning. Ceremonial language, through immediately perceptible forms and symbols, signals the rank of each person within society and legitimizes one's social identity. Clothes, deportment, words, the type of bow used, its degree of inclination, the formalities of visits, titles, commensality, distance in steps between people, and so on are

among the elements necessary to affirm one's own social position and to perceive that of others (Ago 1990: 45). As Valleriani (2004: 17) notes, ceremonial language is nothing more than the translation of hierarchical language. In such a society, the semantics of power—and of social rank as a contextual factor—is central, and language structure, especially as regards grammatical deference, follows suit: deference devices are frequent and their codification is rich and varied, as it needs to reflect the complexity of differences in social rank (O'Driscoll 2010: 273–274).

Second, in the 18th century, new political and economic ideologies revolutionize the social class system, which becomes more important and more 'permeable' (Jucker 2020). As such, this century represents a divide between the *ancien régime* and bourgeois society.⁴ In the 18th century, the socio-cultural premises are laid for later changes to occur in the system of politeness and conduct rules, as well as in the system of grammatical deference, in the form of a reconfiguration of both the function–form relations of the V form (*voi* is substituted by *lei*) and in the relative balance of the power–distance semantics of usage. The two examples in (4) and (5), both from a play by Goldoni, illustrate this point.

- (4) CAVALIERE *Signora, io credo che voi scherziate.*
 'Madam, I believe **you.PL are.PL** joking'
 DORALICE *Perché lo credete?* (Goldoni, FAM, 1, XXI)
 'Why do (you) **believe.2PL** so?'
- (5) ISABELLA *Anche voi mi rompete la testa?*
 'Are **you.PL driving.2PL** me crazy too?'
 DOTTOR *Io non parlo; ma ha ella sentito che cosa ha detto il signor Pantalone?* (Goldoni, FAM, 2, XIII)
 'I am not saying anything but **did.3sg you3FSG** hear what Sir Pantalone said?'

In the comedy, the grammatical deference system includes two V forms: an unmarked *voi* and a marked *lei*, whose use is strictly dependent on the social status of the characters. Both the 'Doctor' and the 'Chevalier' are two gallants, but while Doralice, who is addressed with *voi*, is a member of the middle class, Isabella, who is addressed with *lei*, belongs to the aristocracy. Thus, if in (4) the distance semantics prevails and the choice of the pronoun is in the direction of a reverential use, in (5) the power semantics prevails and vertical deference is chosen.

⁴ In the *ancien régime* (15th–18th centuries), economy was mostly based in agriculture, although trade, dominated by the bourgeoisie, progressively became more important, while the social system was stratified as in the Middle Ages. Bourgeois society identified a social order dominated by the bourgeoisie, or middle class. A bourgeois, in medieval France, denoted an inhabitant of a walled town, but its overtones became important in the 18th century when the middle class of professionals, manufacturers, and their literary and political allies began to demand an influence in politics consistent with their economic status.

As regards conduct rules, bourgeois relational networks begin to challenge existing social rules and new norms are introduced and instantiated through socialization and education. These changes modify the way in which members of the society perceive their social relations (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 142). On one hand, the new social conventions are connected with the economic and cultural rise of the bourgeoisie, whose conventions become a new model and gradually replace those of the aristocracy. On the other hand, the political unification of the Italian peninsula, later in the second half of the 19th century, shapes the transformation of Italians from subjects to citizens and their perceptions of social relations (see Paternoster 2015: 263–267 on the flourishing of conduct books after the political unification). Ideologies regarding conduct, including language use, begin to challenge the centuries-old aristocratic world. Extant politeness rules, which are perceived as false and cold, begin to be fiercely criticized. For instance, in the Lombard newspaper *Il caffè*, the Verri brothers attack the idle aristocracy, whose titles and *precedenze*, as they say, no longer correspond to any actual social usefulness. The aristocratic behavioural code is felt to be old-fashioned and inappropriate for rapport management in a society that is undergoing radical change.

Furthermore, in the 19th century the seeds planted in the previous century grow, as earlier norms based on deference are substituted by new ones aiming to respect the face desires of individuals (Paternoster and Fitzmaurice 2019: 12–16). The system of politeness embarks on major changes: new ways of greeting and exchanging pleasantries are developed. One example, more than others, gives a clear image of the importance of the changes that are taking place, as the vertical hierarchical *riverenza* ‘bow’, perceived as an unbearable sign of servility, is substituted by the horizontal handshake (see Paternoster 2015: 221). Although the aristocratic model of conduct remains in Italy until World War I, it is used alongside the new emerging bourgeois code, so that two different types of politeness are at speakers’ disposal: the old distancing politeness (or negative politeness in Brown and Levinson’s 1987 words) and a new *rapprochement* politeness (or positive politeness; Brown and Levinson 1987), based on reducing the exaggerated distances of the previous centuries (Paternoster 2015: 263–302). Thus, the modernization of conduct in Italy stresses the importance of *rapprochement* politeness involved in meeting the needs of others, so that by the end of the century the system includes both the socially institutionalized *buone maniere* ‘good manners’, which imply putting a civil distance between interlocutors, and *cortesía* ‘courtesy, kindness’, which implies attention to others’ needs (cf. Paternoster 2015: 305–306; Jucker 2020: 160–183). In sum, it is possible to synthesize these changes in the passage from ‘I am what others recognise me to be’ into ‘I am what I recognise myself to be’ (Fedriani and Ghezzi 2025).

The next section analyses and describes how these developments within society and, consequently, within its politeness system are reflected in the development of the system of grammatical deference.

17.4 Data analysis of Italian grammatical deference from the 16th to the 20th century

The data analysis of the evolution of the Italian system of grammatical deference is based on [Ghezzi \(2021\)](#), who considers a series of comedy plays written between the 16th and 20th centuries as synthesized in [Table 17.2](#).

Table 17.2 16th- to 20th-century Italian comedy plays

Century	Author, Title (Year of Publication)	Tokens
1500	Niccolò Machiavelli, <i>La Mandragola</i> (1524)	13,558
	Pietro Aretino, <i>La Cortegiana</i> (1525)	26,034
1700	Carlo Goldoni, <i>La famiglia dell'antiquario</i> (1749)	22,792
	Carlo Goldoni, <i>La locandiera</i> (1753)	22,124
1900	Luigi Pirandello, <i>Così è se vi pare</i> (1917)	17,501
	Luigi Pirandello, <i>Il gioco delle parti</i> (1918)	15,001

From a methodological perspective, some caution must be taken. In the corpus composition there is a difference between the 16th century, where two authors are considered, and the 18th–20th-century plays, where only one author is considered; thus, the writing of only two (or one) language users, with their own personal preferences and style, serves to represent the grammatical deference system of a century. Although it entails limitations on the possibility of generalization, this was a conscious choice, dictated by the themes dealt with in the comedies and by the type of language used by the author.

As for the themes, they were chosen among those that were more socio-historically representative of the history of Italian politeness, as they embody ideologies on socio-cultural conventions of the century when the comedy is written. As for the language, the choice was determined by the variety of Italian used by the playwright: Italian, originally the Tuscan vernacular, has never been a monolithic entity, as it was formed in the absence of a central political state. Initially, it developed as a tool of a community of scholars and literati. It became the national language from the second half of the 19th century, after the political unification, but, up until the early years of the 20th century, it was mostly the language of a written literary tradition rather than a spoken variety.

The 16th-century comedies were chosen because both authors are Tuscan and share similar language varieties. Secondly, they describe two different societies and have opposite ideas on what a theatrical language should look like. *La mandragola* ‘The Mandrake (Potion)’ is set in republican Florence where people of different social standing share the same social environment. In his comedy, Machiavelli adopts an ‘organic monolingualism’; that is, a grammatically homogeneous

language based on the 14th-century literary tradition (Folena 1991: 132). This is combined with a 'functional pluri-stylism' used for rendering characters (Trifone 2000: 33). It is one of the first comedies where characters are presented through their language (Patota 2019: 304). *La cortigiana* 'The Courtesan (Comedy)' is a parody of Roman court life, as Rome was a cosmopolitan centre which Aretino defines as the 'new Babylon' (Paternoster 2019: 32). The language is characterized by a marked multilingualism reflected in different registers used by the characters (cf. Pacagnella 2019: 26). In the play, the author's Tuscan-Romanesque usage prevails (cf. Trovato 2013).

The 18th-century comedies, instead, are both written by Carlo Goldoni, who was the most, and almost the only, representative Italian playwright of the century. He introduced an important theatrical reformation together with an Italian *koiné* to be used in the plays. Although the two comedies are set in Sicily and in Florence, both portray the decadence of the Venetian aristocracy, while celebrating the reason and common sense of the bourgeoisie. On the part of the language, there is a shift from the language of the masks of the *Commedia dell'arte* 'comedy of art' to the language of the bourgeoisie and commoners. The lack of a common standard 'Italian' language, which could be understood by audiences throughout the peninsula, made Goldoni's comedies the first attempt at an expressive experimentalism (cf. D'Onghia 2014: 160–163). The writer creates a 'spoken' theatrical *koiné* that has the liveliness of spoken Florentine. This *koiné* is nourished with the language spoken by educated people in the northern regions; it is enriched with Venetian and French tones and written literary usages (Folena 1958: 25). Different codes, namely Italian and Venetian in the two comedies analysed, are exploited in the depiction of characters and operate as stylistic planes to which the characters adapt accordingly. Code-switching gives voice to the language ideologies of the time. At one extreme is Venetian, the language of nature, impulsivity, and expressivity, but also of cosy affectivity. At the other is Italian, the language of social convention and interaction (Folena 1993: 194).

The early 20th-century comedies analysed, *Così è se vi pare* 'So It Is (If You Think So)' and *Il giuoco delle parti* 'The Rules of the Game', are written by Pirandello. At the beginning of the 20th century, the need to identify a common national Italian language is felt with difficulty. Pirandello identifies this variety 'in the language spoken (or that wants to be spoken) in schools and which is found in books' (Pirandello 1965: 879). Thus, in the comedies he adopts a medium formal Italian register, but he avoids more marked traits both of the high literary register and of regional and popular varieties (Trifone 2000: 96). In the comedies, this choice is reflected in the lack of a specific setting and the themes can help explain these choices, as Pirandello gives voice, for the first time, to the existential anguish of individuals by plumbing the recesses and difficulties of modern man.

Lastly, as regards the tagging scheme used in the analysis, each address form (pronouns, nominal forms, and verb agreement) was annotated and tagged for

two different orders of parameters: the type of exchange within the power/vertical and distance/horizontal dimensions (i.e. reciprocal vs. non-reciprocal and distant vs. intimate exchanges) and the macro-social variables relating to characters (i.e. social status, kinship relation, and gender). A synthesis that emerges from the data is given for each century in the paragraphs that follow, while we refer to [Ghezzi \(2021\)](#) for a detailed discussion of examples.

17.4.1 Grammatical deference in 16th-century comedies

Grammatical deference is characterized by a substantially binary system with an unmarked V1 form *voi* ‘you.2PL’ and a T form *tu* ‘you.2SG’. Norms for *tu-voi* variation are based on a non-reciprocal power semantics that is vertical in nature, as non-reciprocal *tu-voi* indexes power, particularly the status of characters (e.g. masters are addressed with *voi* by their servants, who receive a *tu*), but also their kinship relation, especially among characters belonging to higher classes. For instance, in Machiavelli’s *La Mandragola*, Messer Nicia addresses his wife Lucrezia with *tu* but receives *voi*.

Conversely, in the distance dimension, the use of a reciprocal pattern with *voi* indexes civil formality and reciprocal *tu* intimacy. *Voi* characterizes interactions among members of higher classes, while reciprocal *tu* does so for those of lower classes.

A second marginal V form (V2), which only concerns verb agreement, is used in connection with the honorific *Vostra Signoria* ‘Your Lordship’. This is a characteristic trait of Aretino’s comedy but it is totally absent in Machiavelli. In Aretino, *Vostra Signoria* and third-person verb agreement are used as overly deferent forms or to mock courtly behaviour, as seen in (6).

- (6) *Sanese: Dite: la Signoria Vostra. Non sentisti voi Maestro Andrea che disse: la Signoria Vostra?*
 ‘Say.2PL Your Lordship. Didn’t you.2PL hear.2PL Master Andrea saying: Your Lordship?’
Messer Maco: Mi raccomando alla Signoria Vostra.
 ‘I recommend myself to Your Lordship’
Sanese: Bene; mandate su la veste!
 ‘Very good; lift.2PL up your vest’
Messer Maco: Così, la Signoria Vostra?
 ‘Like this, Your Lordship?’
Sanese: Messer sì; accomciate la berretta così, andate largo di qua, di là; ben, benissimo. (CORT, I, 3)
 ‘Yes Sir, put.2PL (your) hat like this, walk.2PL this way, that way; good, very good’

In the extract, Messer Maco, a simpleton from Siena who went to Rome to become the perfect courtier, after having been put through a series of hilarious tests,

is rehearsing his courtly behaviour with the help of his servant Sanese. This behaviour includes specific ways of posing, dressing, and speaking. One important landmark of courtly language is the use of *Vostra Signoria*.

17.4.2 Grammatical deference in 18th-century comedies

In 18th-century comedies, the system of grammatical deference is more markedly orientated towards the power semantics. The system of address includes three forms, a marginal T form *tu*, used only when emotions come to the surface (as in (7)), and two V forms for grammatical deference: a reverential V1 *voi* 'you.2PL' and a deferential V2 *lei* 'she.3SG'. The system is strongly orientated towards the power semantics and social status is the only parameter indexed. Non-reciprocal patterns are rather fixed: they include *lei-tu* in interactions among the lower class and aristocracy (8) and *lei-voi* among the middle class and aristocracy (9). Apart from grammatical deference, lexical means are also relevant to indexing the power dimension, particularly titles and honorifics, which are frequent and varied (e.g. *Vostra Signoria* 'Your Lordship' and routinized variants as *Vossignoria* or *Vosustrissima* from *Vostra Signoria Illustrissima* 'Your most illustrious Lordship').

- (7) DORALICE *Signor padre, vi ringrazio dell'amorosa correzione che mi fate.*
 'Sir father, I thank you.2PL for the kind correction that (you) are.2PL doing me'
 PANTALONE *Vostra madonna sarà in tutte le furie, e con rason. [...] Via, cara fia, d'ame un poco de consolazion. No gh'ho altri a sto mondo che ti. Dopo la mia morte, ti sarà parona de tutto.*⁵ (FAM, I, 2)
 'Your.2PL mother-in-law will have flown off the handle and she is right. [...] Come on, dear daughter, give.2SG me some consolation. I do not have anybody else in the world with the only exception of you.2SG. After my death you.2SG will own.2SG everything'
- (8) BRIGHELLA *La me perdona; ma buttar via tanti bezzi in ste cosse*
 'Please (you.ACC.3SG.F) forgive.3SG me, but to throw away so much money in these things ...'
 ANSELMO *Buttar via? Buttar via? [...] Senti se vuoi avere la mia protezione, non mi parlar mai contro il buon gusto delle antichità* (FAM, I, 1)
 'Throw away? Throw away? Listen.2SG, if (you) want.2SG to stay at my service, do not speak against the good taste of antiques'

⁵ In the examples, code-switching to Venetian is underlined. In the comedies analysed, Venetian is a characteristic trait of the lower classes and the bourgeoisie.

- (9) ANSELMO *Ridete, perché non ven' intendete.*

'(You) **laugh.2PL** because **you.2PL** do not **know.2PL** (these things)'

PANTALONE

Benissimo, mi son ignorante, ella xé virtuoso, e non voi catar bega su questo.

(FAM, I, 18)

'Well then. I am ignorant and **you.3FSG** **are.3SG** **clever.MSG**, and I do not want to discuss it'

In the distance dimension, there are relevant innovations in comparison with the 16th century, as the reverential use of V1 (*voi*) expands, together with its domain of use, to the point that it indexes almost any parameter (or none). By contrast, its deferential function is taken over by V2 (*lei*), along the power dimension. In connection with these developments within the grammatical system of deference, other lexical means, apart from titles and honorifics (*signor conte* 'sir count'), are added to the repertoire to modulate social distance, as is the case of kinship terms (e.g. *moglie* 'wife') or endearment terms (e.g. *cara* 'dear').

17.4.3 Grammatical deference in 20th-century comedies

In 20th-century comedies, the distance dimension, and its horizontal semantics, became dominant. The non-reciprocal vertical pattern is peripheral in the system, especially as regards grammatical deference. However, some instances of *lei-tu* or *voi-tu* patterns are found. In the comedies considered, these patterns develop between a butler and his master: the first pattern characterizes more formal relations, the second more intimate ones. Instead, lexical deference develops more in the vertical dimension: for instance, surnames (*Centuri*) versus professional titles (*signor Prefetto* 'Mister Prefect') are indexes of differences in power among characters.

The reciprocal horizontal pattern is central for grammatical deference and is dominated by a *lei-lei* structure for formal interactions or *tu-tu* for intimate ones (10).

- (10) LEONE *Avanti, avanti, Barelli!—Oh! Con tutto questo armamentario?*

'Come in, come in, **Barelli!** Oh, with all this paraphernalia?'

BARELLI *Ah, senti, caro mio: sono cose da pazzi ... da idioti ... [...] Che cos'è?*

'**Listen.2SG**, **dear friend**, these are crazy things, silly things. What is it?'

LEONE *Ti presento alla mia signora (A Silia): Barelli, tiratore formidabile.*

'I introduce **you.2SG** to my wife (to Silia): Barelli, an excellent shooter'

BARELLI (*s'inchina*). [...] *Io non ho mai visto una cosa simile! Mi*

perdoni, signora; ma se non lo dico, io ... io ci faccio una malattia, ecco.

'(he bows). [...] I've never seen such a thing! **Forgive.3SG** **me, Madam;** but if I don't say it, I ... I'll get mad, that's it'

The domain of *tu* expands in this dimension when compared with the situation in the 18th century. New elements enrich the repertoire of lexical forms within both the distance and the intimacy poles; this is especially true for endearment terms such as *cara signora* 'dear madam' or diminutives like *zietto* 'uncle.DIM'.

Moving on from the situation described for each century, it is possible to summarize the developments of the Italian grammatical system of deference in the comedies. In the 16th century (see Figure 17.2), the vertical dimension of power is central: *voi* indexes higher status, as it is used reciprocally among the higher classes or by the lower classes to address them, whereas the use of *Vostra Signoria* and of third-person verb agreement index courtly behaviour. The system of *distancing* politeness is central.

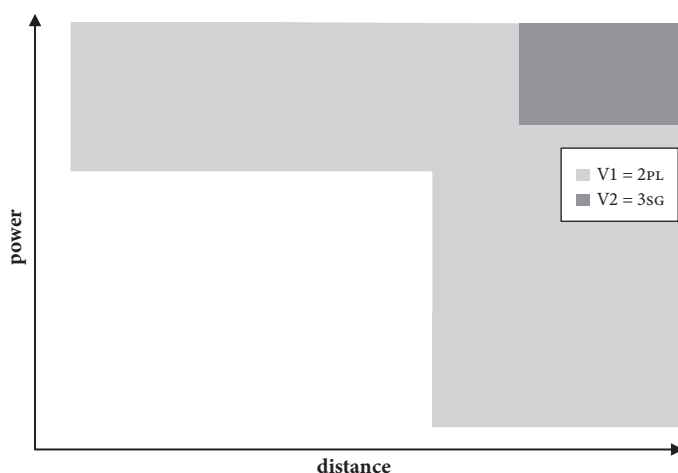


Figure 17.2 Grammatical deference in 16th-century comedies.

In the 18th century (see Figure 17.3), reverential *voi* indexes 'civil' relations, especially along the horizontal distance dimension; deferential *lei* indexes social status along the vertical power dimension, while an intricate repertoire of titles and honorifics is used for the correct social positioning. Thus, the politeness system is still dominated by *distancing* politeness. However, new types of strategies appear, especially associated with the use of endearment terms, which modulate reciprocal distance (intimate vs. formal relations), and a new type of *rapprochement* politeness begins to develop.

In the 20th century (see Figure 17.4), reciprocal *tu* is used for intimate relations, reciprocal *lei* is used for formal ones, and *voi* is marginal. Lexical deference develops along the power dimension. The horizontal distance dimension is central and two types of politeness are at speakers' disposal: a *distancing* politeness and a *rapprochement* politeness.

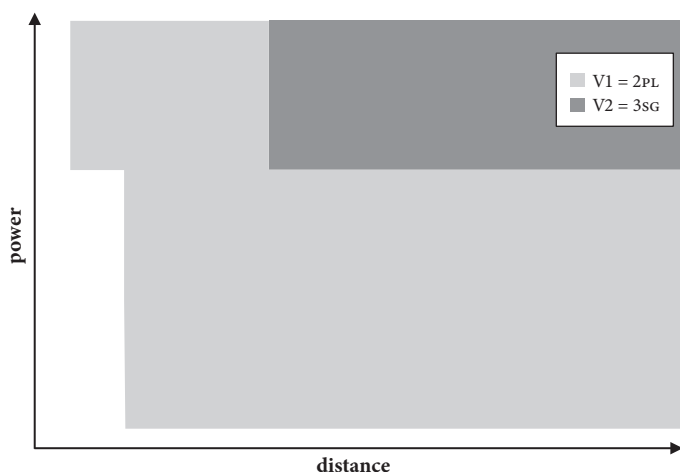


Figure 17.3 Grammatical deference in 18th-century comedies

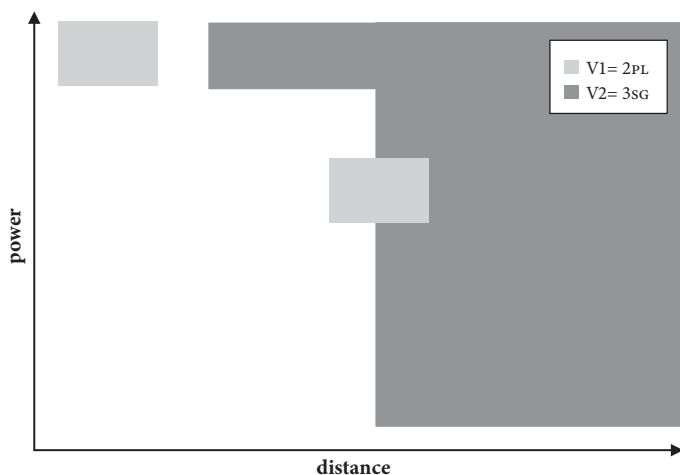


Figure 17.4 Grammatical deference in 20th-century comedies

17.5 Concluding remarks

The slant development of grammatical deference in IE languages has been explained as having its roots in the increasing relevance of the category of person. This change is linear in essence as it inserts itself into the linear evolution from synthetic to analytic that characterizes IE languages but, in a minority of European languages, creates the *humus* for the development of cyclical changes, as in the case of Italian analysed here. In these languages, the system of grammatical deference shifts over the centuries towards less definite categories, or to a less

definite constituent within a category (e.g. from second plural as deferent to third singular feminine). Different factors, which are not strictly 'systemic', played a role in favouring these cyclical changes; particularly relevant are socio-cultural, communicative, and cognitive factors, which are all interrelated in the development of Italian grammatical deference.

The Italian system develops from a situation where the vertical dimension of power is central (16th–18th-century comedies) to one where that of horizontal distance is more relevant (20th-century comedies) (see [Figures 17.2–17.4](#)).

In the 16th century, the courtly ideal is dominant in (parts of) society (Rome vs. Florence) and ridiculed in comedies (*La cortigiana*). The exact social positioning is so relevant that it is codified in an all-Italian intricate system of *precedenze* 'precedencies' and *cerimonie* 'ceremonies'. This ceremonious etiquette is initially used in courtly contexts, but it progressively spreads to other parts of society, thus increasing the range of contexts where titles are required (*curializzazione della società* 'courtization of society', [Valleriani 2004](#): 17)—that is, feminine abstract nouns that imply third-person verb agreement—thus creating the opportunity for routinization of third-singular verb agreement and, later, of 3FSG pronouns.

In the 18th century, the *ancien régime* and its conduct rules begin to be seen as old-fashioned and unbearable. In the system of grammatical deference, the use of *voi* is ubiquitous and its spread is propelled by its role as a pronoun used by aristocrats and to them. This use qualifies it as a 'contextual' prestige variable; that is, a desirable trait to be used also by members of other classes who want to position themselves positively within the 'competitive' public ceremonial of the time (see [Labov 1972](#) on prestige variants). However, within the linguistic system, widespread *voi* develops indexicality within the distance dimension, acquiring an increasingly reverential value which indexes civil formality. At the same time, it loses its role within the power dimension, so that its original deferential role is taken over by *lei*.

This development is propelled by changes in politeness systems, as the 16th-century *power deference* is gradually substituted by a 'distance' deference. The trajectory of *voi* is exemplary in this regard: as *voi* is the canonical form used among aristocrats or, more generally, when speaking to them, initially its indexical value of prestige plays a role in its spread across other classes, but this same value is later responsible for its general decline because of the linguistic ideology attached to it. In the 20th century, as the bourgeoisie promotes a new type of *rapprochement* politeness, the system of grammatical deference is rooted in the horizontal semantics of social distance, where reciprocal *lei* indexes distance relations. Two different developments are at work. On the one hand, the incipient V2 form *lei* substitutes the 'old-fashioned' V1 *voi*. This form remains, however, as a marginal deferent variant until the end of World War II. On the other hand, the T form *tu*, which in the 18th century is relegated to moments when the ability to efface emotions is put to the test, is used in a higher number of contexts to index intimacy. In

other words, the domains of use of *voi* in the distance dimension are progressively eroded in favour of both those of *lei* and *tu*, and in the power dimension, in favour of those of *lei*.

Thus, what emerges from these trajectories is that the dynamics of change that characterize the system of grammatical deference revolve around both pragmatic enrichment and weakening. The first is essential both to the individual diachronic trajectories of the two V forms and to the cycle formed by them. The propagation of *voi* to new contexts of use, through the development of a reverential value within the social distance dimension, as opposed to its original use in the domain of the vertical dimension of power, is a crucial stage in its trajectory as this allows its original deferential role to be later taken over by *lei*. This is essentially a pragmatic enrichment. The stage at which *lei* gains ground over *voi* is also a stage of pragmatic enrichment, which is made possible by the concomitant pragmatic weakening of *voi* also in its reverential value.

These developments, which include changes to both forms and functions, can be connected with diachronically informed changes related to synchronic variation. From the 16th century onwards, two competing forms expressing grammatical deference are at speakers' disposal (i.e. V1 *voi* or V2 *lei*). The forms are not fully synonymous in terms of their pragmatic functions in the system of social deixis and in their grammatical meaning, and their use is not comparable at the socio-linguistic level either, as V1 soon becomes a common form among all social classes, while V2 remains a prerogative of address to higher classes for a long time. *Voi* is the unmarked and canonical V form, while *lei* is the marked form and has a 'satellite' role (Koch and Oesterreicher 1996; Detges 2020: 301–302), as it begins to be used in contexts associated with the court and has a 'courtly' connotation. Thus, *voi* is increasingly used in any type of contexts and registers, whereas *lei* is used in more deferential ones. However, *lei* begins to oust the canonical *voi*, especially when the domain of use of *voi* expands. This implies changes at two levels: (a) at the level of function, as a consequence of repeated overuse, due to the Italian ceremonious etiquette, where titles and honorifics played an important role, the use of *lei* gradually generalizes its grammatical deferential function, without a co-occurring title, and (b) at the socio-linguistic level, it gradually becomes more acceptable also in contexts without a courtly connotation to express first deferential values and then reverential ones.

Therefore, what ended the pragmatic life cycle of *voi* is partly its internal deficiency when it comes to expressing deference, its original function, and partly speakers' preference for its competitor *lei*. As Detges (2020: 309–310) notes, there is competition between items involved in cyclic change at two levels. If, on one hand, little change is observable with respect to the canonical *voi*, on the other hand, many innovations characterize the trajectory of *lei* (HON + 3SG/2PL verb agreement > PRON.NOM (*ella*) + 3FSG verb agreement > PRON.ACC (*lei*) + 3F/M.SG verb agreement). This evolution can be described as a push chain: the incipient *lei*

arises from courtly contexts, then processes of curialization of society favour an increase in the frequency of contexts where *lei* is (over)used, which leads to the loss of its courtly connotation. More and more, *lei* turns into a functional equivalent of *voi*, first in the vertical dimension of power and then in the horizontal dimension of social distance. Meanwhile, *voi*, due to the cognitive propensity to routinization connected with its prestige role, loses its salience and expressivity in the system, as it is progressively extended to almost all communication domains (18th-century comedies). This results in the weakening of its (socio-)pragmatic force due to its frequency of use, being used to address virtually anyone, and to the fading of its distinctive value, as it no longer expresses deference, being so widespread (Mithun 2016). These developments lead to a mismatch between form and function, which results in the renewal of the V form (*voi* > *lei*). Such changes are favoured by the socio-ideological climate of profound critique of the rules of polite behaviour and social relations, which play a role in propelling first routinization and then pragmatic weakening.

Therefore, motivations for language change reside in the needs of speakers, who tweak language conventions for their advantage in communication (Waltereit 2012). Thus, the Italian cycle of grammatical deference presents evidence against a predominantly system-based explanation of cyclic change. This explanation would struggle to explain how an essentially functional evolution could take place even if the diachronic intervals involved are so extensive (400 years) that the nature of the overall linguistic system of grammatical deference (and of the contextual parameters involved) has changed considerably in the meantime. In their trajectories, both *lei* and *voi* change their pragmatic value so that the resulting outcome of the change is a spiral-like evolution rather than a return to the point of departure (see Figure 17.5).

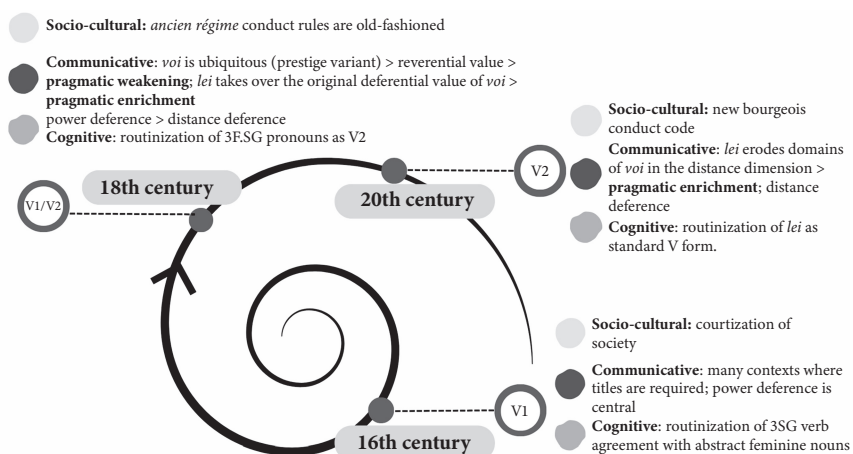


Figure 17.5 The Italian cycle of grammatical deference

Finally, the development of the Italian grammatical deference system sheds light on how social factors affect the cognitive basis for language use, which, in turn, the morphology of the language comes to reflect. However, its cyclical or spiral-like development, and the similarities of developments that took place in other European languages (e.g. Spanish *usted*, Portuguese *você*, German *Sie*, and Danish and Norwegian *de*), also highlight the interrelation of pragmatic cyclical developments that occur in specific contexts (and languages) and more general forces at work, as is the case of the increase in relevance of the category of person that drives linear directional processes in IE languages.

Acknowledgements

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Pragmatic cycles in Spanish farewell routines

Ana Llopis Cardona

18.1 Introduction: Spanish farewell routines

Everyday interactions in any language tend to have a repertoire of verbal expressions, alongside certain multimodal gestures, that are used to bring a conversation to an end. This array of verbal routines has been accumulating over time into an assorted repertoire, which is also noticeable in the current paradigm of Spanish farewell routines, some of which are the focus of this study. Figure 18.1 shows a non-exhaustive overview of Spanish farewell routines classified according to their category (cf. Grzegą 2005; Zieliński 2021).

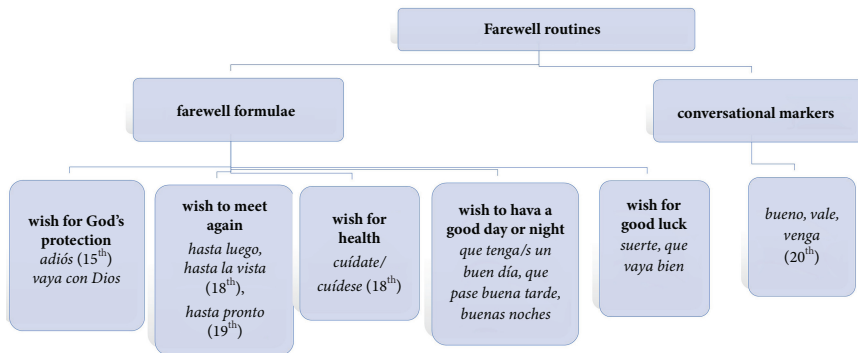


Figure 18.1 Classification of Spanish farewell routines

Translations: *adiós/vaya con Dios* ('goodbye'), *hasta luego* ('see you later'), *hasta la vista* ('see you'), *hasta pronto* ('see you soon'), *cuidate/cuidese* ('take care'), *que tenga un buen día* ('have a good day'), *que pase una buena tarde* ('have a good afternoon'), *suerte* ('good luck'), *que vaya bien* ('I hope it turns out well'), *bueno* ('well'), *vale* ('ok'), and *venga* ('come on').

The first type are social formulae (Heine 2023) or, more specifically, farewell formulae (this term being reserved for traditional farewell forms, whereas I use *farewell routines* in a broader sense), which have arisen from desiderative acts

through which speakers express good wishes to their addressees. These include expressing a wish for God's protection of others, meeting again soon, good health, having a nice day, or good luck when undertaking some sort of challenge. Many of these farewell formulae are quite similar in Romance languages, as a result of various causes.¹ Some medieval forms may have taken a common Proto-Romance basis (e.g. *ad Deum* > Cat. *adéu*, It. *addio*, Fr. *adieu*, Gal. *adeus*, Port. *adeus*, Ru. *adio*, Sp. *adiós*)² (Zieliński 2021) and some modern forms may have been influenced by language contact³ via semantic calques (e.g. Fr. *au revoir* > Sp. *a más ver*; Fr. *à bientôt* > Sp. *hasta pronto*) (Zieliński 2019). The potential interferences between Romance languages have led to the suggestion that these items are subject to cultural diffusion (Zieliński 2021). This is made much more evident by the loanwords borrowed from other Western languages throughout history, such as the Latin *vale/valete* (literally 'stay healthy'), the Italian *ciao* (< Venetian It. *schiaavo suo* 'your slave' > Med. Lat. *sclavus*), and the English *bye/bye-bye* (> *goodbye* < 'God be with you') (Arnovick 1999; Zieliński 2021). The Latin forms *vale/valete* were introduced during the Humanist movement in the Renaissance and the Spanish Golden Age. In contrast, the Italian *ciao* and English *bye* (< *goodbye*) were adopted in informal registers during the 20th century, especially the last third of the century.

The second types of expressions in Figure 18.1 correspond to conversational markers that are sometimes used in pre-closings and can occasionally function to close a conversation (Cestero and Moreno 2008; in English, Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Couper-Kuhlen 2021; among others). They tend to be *response signals*⁴ (*bueno* 'well', *vale* 'ok'), and more rarely, *directives*⁵ (*venga* 'come on'), according to Heine (2023). These uses may have been part of a general process known as colloquialization, which is understood as the extension of a speech-like style (cf. Farrelly and Seoane 2012).

Both groups exhibit clear differences. The meaning of farewell is generally transparent and serves as its basic function in farewell formulae derived from desiderative acts, whereas this meaning is opaque and fulfils a contextual function as conversational markers. However, in terms of pragmatic motivation, these diverse farewell routines share commonalities, as they generally proceed from positive politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson 1987). On the one hand, traditional farewell formulae originally expressed solidarity ('God be with you', 'take

¹ For hypotheses concerning their origins, see Buchi and Stadler (2008).

² Particularly, the Spanish *adiós* seems to proceed from *quédate a Dios* or *a Dios seays* (*encomendado*) ('Remain with God' or 'I commend you to God') by ellipsis (Vila and Faya 2016).

³ Theticals 'enjoy a clearly privileged status' among the linguistic expressions commonly recruited for code-switching, as pointed out by Heine, Kaltenböck, Kuteva, and Long (2017: 845).

⁴ Similar uses are observed in markers of agreement in many languages, i.e. French *d'accord* ('ok') and English *ok* and *well/well then*.

⁵ According to corpus data (CDH), *venga* might have derived from a soft request, *venga luego* ('come later').

care') or affiliation ('see you'). Initially, they aim to strengthen the positive face of the addressee by avoiding an abrupt end to the interactive exchange. Certainly, once ritualized, farewell formulae belong to ritual or normative politeness (Briz 2004), indicating that the speaker adheres to socio-pragmatic codes. Speakers can also employ other positive politeness strategies, such as vocatives, to reinforce social ties (e.g. *cuídate, María* 'take care, Mary' or *nos vemos, tío* 'see you, mate'). On the other hand, conversational markers functioning as closing markers primarily manifest as acceptance of opinions, invitations, proposals, and so on (like *bueno* 'well', *vale* 'ok'), thereby creating common ground between interlocutors. They may be used in farewell dialogues because of the role of acceptance in closing conversations: both the closure of the topic under discussion and that of the conversation must be accepted. Also, these conversational markers soften the harshness of the farewells when farewells are perceived as threatening or dispreferred acts (Brown and Levinson 1987: 152; Fernández 2010).

18.2 Potential pragmatic cycles in farewell routines

Studies of cyclicity have significantly increased in the last two decades. There has been a particular focus on (morpho)syntactic phenomena (e.g. van Gelderen 2009b; Larrivée and Ingham 2011; Bouzouita et al. 2019), as well as some attention to pragmatic changes (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a; Hansen 2014, 2018a, 2020b). In general, linguistic cycles are understood as recurrent changes that follow a similar pattern of evolution involving a replacement or renewal of linguistic items. In particular, pragmatic cycles '[affect] linguistic items that express more subjective, context-dependent and non-truth-conditional meanings, such as the speaker's stance, or how the utterance fits into the surrounding discourse' (Hansen 2020b: 168; cf. Hansen 2014, 2018a). Therefore, it is possible to see a movement from semantics to pragmatics that consists of a repetition of a previous pattern, which ultimately results in the replacement of markers.

According to Pons and Llopis (2020), a pragmatic cycle is characterized by both internal and external features. In terms of internal properties, these include a renewal of a linguistic change, going from a similar source meaning to a similar pragmatic extension. This development occurs gradually, involving a decrease in usage and perhaps the loss of the old form. As for external features, the renewal takes place across different time spans and in similar registers, sociolects, or dialects. These properties are observed in the cases reviewed in the literature, for instance the temporal-scalar cline in the particles Latin *iam* ('(as of) now'/'already') > Old French *ja* > Modern French *déjà* (Hansen 2014, 2018a) or the path of directive acts-verbs that evolved into courtesy markers in Latin *rogo, quaeso* 'I pray, I ask' and later in Italian *chiedo* ('I ask'), *prego* ('I pray') (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a).

Regarding farewell routines in Spanish, I will therefore review whether a cline is repeated at different points in time over the history of Spanish. In this sense, a potential case of a cycle could be the farewell formulae *a/hasta más ver* ‘see you’ and *nos vemos/ya nos veremos* ‘see you’. These two constructions both use the verb *ver* (‘to see’). *A/hasta más ver* dates back to the 17th century ((1), (2)),⁶ then remained in use until the first half of the 20th century, but became obsolete and stopped being employed around the last third of that century. By contrast, *nos vemos/Ya nos veremos* have been attested as farewell expressions since the first third of the 20th century (3) and their use has increased significantly over the last third of the 20th century (4) (cf. Zieliński 2019). A more comprehensive study should be carried out in the future.

- (1) Y porque le hago rodear su camino, guarde Dios a V.M. y a más ver. (Diego López de Arenas, *Breve compendio de la carpintería de lo blanco y tratado de alarifes*, 1633, CDH)

‘And because I make you take a detour, may God save Your Grace and until we meet again.’

- (2) MARIANA. *Hasta más ver*, compañeras. (Ramón de la Cruz, *Los baños útiles*, 1765, CDH)

‘Mariana. Until we meet again, companions.’

- (3) —[...] ¡Señor Peredita, *nos vemos*! (Valle Inclán, *Tirano Banderas*, 1927, CDH)

‘Mister Peredita, see you!’

- (4) —*Nos vemos*. Saluda a todos (Max Aub, *La gallina ciega*, 1971, CDH)

‘See you. Say hello to everybody.’

In addition, I want to examine whether some instances of pragmaticalization that have occurred in Spanish also took place in Latin, its mother language. This would not imply continuation through Vulgar Latin, but rather a decrease in use or loss in some period of Latin or Spanish, followed by a later renewal within a filiation chain. Although the renewal may be exclusive to Spanish, it might also be shared by other Romance languages.

In Latin, the repertoire for farewell routines includes only *vale/valete* (literally ‘stay healthy’), which appear chiefly in oral interactions (cf. Beach 1955; Pocetti 2010) but also in letters, which displayed more variety with phrases such as *cura ut valeas* (‘take care that you be well’) or *opto te valere* (‘I hope that you be well’)

⁶ These are my translations, except where a source is indicated.

(cf. Gunderson 2007; Pocetti 2010). Returning to Spanish farewell formulae, there are instances that seem to be related to the Lat. *vale/valete*, and so deserve a deeper analysis in order to verify whether they can be identified as pragmatic cycles.

On the one hand, the Spanish *cuídate/cuídese* display a similar source meaning ('take care') to *vale* ('stay healthy') and were adopted as farewell formulae ((5), (6)). Thus, it seems to be a case of a semantic-pragmatic cycle, taking into account the source meaning and the resulting pragmatic function.

- (5) (At the end of a letter) *Cuídate y manda*. (Leandro Fernández de Moratín, *Cartas de 1817*, 1817, CDH)

'Take care and at your service.'

- (6) —Fiore: ¡*Cuídate*, Antxón! (Ignacio Amestoy, *Durango, un sueño*, 1989, CDH)

'Fiore: Take care, Antxon!'

On the other hand, the Spanish form *vale* comes from the same etymon as the Latin *vale* (Lat. *valeo* > Sp. *valer*), and it started to function to express agreement (7) and occasionally to close a conversation (8).

- (7) —Te acompaño hasta el cruce. ¿Vale?
—*Vale*. (José Martín Vigil, *Una chabola de Bilbao*, 1961)

'I walk with you to the crossing, ok?'

'Ok.'

- (8) Iñaki: Habíamos pensado celebrar su cumpleaños el domingo/ ¿podrás venir?

Mikel: Sí/ supongo que sí/ te llamo yo por teléfono

Iñaki: Sí sí

Mikel: *Vale*/ hasta luego

Iñaki: Adiós (*La muerte de Mikel*, 1984, COLFI)

'Iñaki: We had thought of celebrating her birthday on Sunday. Will you be able to come?

Mikel: Yes/ I guess so / I'll phone you

Iñaki: Yes yes

Mikel: *Ok* / see you

Iñaki: Bye.'

Initially, the starting point (= same etymon) and endpoint (= farewell/closing) of both evolutions appear similar. However, upon closer examination, the resemblance between the two seems to weaken. Romance languages developed a new polysemic structure for the verb *valeo* inherited from Latin (Cat. *valdre*, Fr. *valoir*,

It. *valere*, Sp. *valer*), in which the meaning ‘stay healthy’ was either removed entirely or remained only in very few usages (see Sections 18.6.1 and 18.7.2). Therefore, it is relevant to study what the semantic basis of the pragmatic function of agreement is and explore whether both source meanings are somehow related. The endpoint of pragmatic change differs in each case, as Lat. *vale* normally served as a farewell, while Sp. *vale* only does so in certain contexts.

This study aims to determine whether these potential cases can be considered pragmatic cycles and, if so, to identify their specific type. The following section (18.3) describes the corpus data collected for the distinct cases under study and the specific features that will be examined. Section 18.4 focuses on the pragmatic change of the Latin *vale/valete* into a farewell formula, as well as its persistence and decrease in Spanish. Section 18.5 deals with how *cuidate/cuidese* developed as a way to bid farewell in Modern Spanish. Section 18.6 is dedicated to the conversational marker *vale*, focusing on uses functioning as farewell. Finally, Section 18.7 reflects on these cases in relation to essential features, suggesting the gradualness of certain features (such as resemblance) and, in addition, showing that socio-cultural motivations⁷ can play a role in pragmatic changes.

18.3 Methodology

Data from different corpora were retrieved to explore the cases under study. Regarding Latin, I consulted Perseus Digital Library, in particular Roman and Renaissance materials; in addition, I looked up examples in the *Patrologia Latina*. With regards to Spanish forms, I mainly used the *Corpus del Diccionario histórico de la lengua española* (CDH). Furthermore, I also searched attestations of *cuidate/cuidese* in *Hemeroteca Digital* to find earlier attestations and fill gaps in CDH. Finally, with respect to the Spanish *vale*, I used several corpora: a written corpus composed of novels and drama, and three oral corpora (CORLEC, Val.Es.Co. 2002) and one consisting of film transcripts (COLFI). All these corpora are included in Table 18.1.

To explore the cases, I first categorized them based on pragmatic-discourse functions, which were generally reduced to ‘good wishes’/‘good wishes + farewell’/‘farewell’. I also considered the type of text (elaborated⁸ or spontaneous orality vs. writing) and genre (dialogues drama/novels, letters, prologues, and other books). Furthermore, I examined the discourse unit in which the item is hosted by widening the Val.Es.Co. Model (Briz and Val.Es.Co. Research Group

⁷ This idea was developed early on by Coseriu (1958 [1978]).

⁸ The term ‘elaborated orality’ refers to texts that imitate orality or are intended to be reproduced orally. These texts contain informal and standard features, alongside formulae typical in oratorical and deliberative style (cf. Del Rey 2019: 292).

Table 18.1 Corpora used in the study

Form	Corpus	N. of words	N. of examples
Latin <i>vale/valete</i>	Perseus Digital Library	68,925,971	264 <i>vale</i> + 98 <i>valete</i>
	Patrologia Latina	(unknown)	1468
Spanish <i>vale/valete</i> as loanwords	<i>Corpus del Diccionario histórico de la lengua española</i> (CDH)	196,373,789 ^a	186 <i>vale</i> + 8 <i>valete</i> 237 <i>cúidese</i> , <i>cuídate</i> , <i>cuidaos</i>
Spanish <i>cúidese/ cuídate cuidaos</i>	Country: Spain		
	Hemeroteca Digital (BNE)	(unknown)	60
Spanish <i>vale</i> (2nd half 20th)	Novels + drama	8,076,593	177
	COLFI ^b (movies)	445,945	347
	CORLEC	182,564	295
	VAL.ES.CO. 2002	128,394	47

^aThis is the number of words for the period spanning from the 14th to the 20th century.

^bI made use of the preliminary version of this corpus in 2022.

Table 18.2 Adaptation of Val.Es.Co. model to positions and discourse units of this study

prefarewell + acceptance	first dialogue ^a or topic mid-dialogues or topics last dialogue or topic
farewell	last exchange last intervention
farewell + closure	last act absolute final position ^b

^aIn the Val.Es.Co. model, a conversation encompasses various dialogues. Specifically, 'dialogues, like chapters in novels, are sets of *interventions*, demarcated by an initiating intervention on the top and by a reactive intervention on the bottom. In between, dialogues host an undetermined number of reactive-initiating interventions working out on *the same topic*' (my italics) (Estellés and Pons 2014: 143; cf. Briz et al. 2003: 23). As in written texts like letters, these are not dialogues strictly speaking, so I opt for distinguishing *topics*, which can be considered equivalent to the dialogues defined above.

^bEstellés and Pons (2014: 143) posit the *absolute initial position* by examining certain discourse markers that can appear at the beginning of a text, as well as 'greetings, formulae, vocative-based DMs, vocatives' (Estellés and Pons 2014: 135–137). In this study, I expand the absolute position to the end, which includes a similar set of items.

2003) to written texts (see Table 18.2). It is important to note that speakers typically do not wish to leave abruptly, so farewells are often made up by sequences involving a combination of all or several of the following: pre-farewells, acceptance, farewells, replies, and closings (Schegloff and Sacks 1973; cf. Gallardo 1996: 75–76; Fernández 2010). The farewell sequence is part of the last dialogue or last topic discussed, encompassing the exchange and intervention for replies and closures.

18.4 Latin *vale/valete* as a farewell routine throughout history

18.4.1 Latin *vale/valete* in Old Latin

The verb *valeo* originally meant ‘to be physically powerful, have strength’ and was later extended to ‘to be in sound health’ (cf. Glare 1996). The latter meaning served as the semantic basis from which the new pragmatic extension derived. This development took place via desiderative acts. The *vale/valete* formulae may have originated in everyday encounters to express good wishes to the addressee. In this way, according to Beach (1955), they were routinized in the *sermo cotidianus* into seeing someone off. At times, they were used to mark adverse situations, such as diseases, setbacks, or farewells between family members or lovers when parting for a long time. As shown in Figure 18.2, these forms were seen as ideal expressions to bid farewell politely.

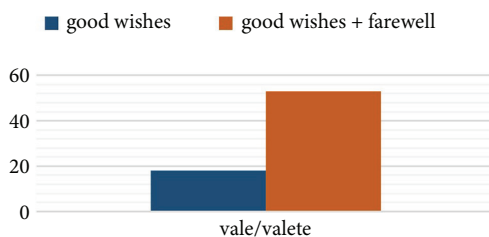


Figure 18.2 Pragmatic functions of *vale/valete* in Old Latin according to PDC

Data from comedies by Plautus and Terence reveals the tendency towards long sequences for saying goodbye. In this regard, Beach (1955) points out that along with *vale* one can add *bene ambulato* or *ambula clementer* (‘take it easy’), as well as questions such as *numquid me vis?* or *numquid me vultis* (‘do you want anything else from me’) to avoid leaving abruptly.

The following dialogue (9) is clearly a farewell dialogue. Gymnasium asks her mother if she needs anything from her, who replies *ut valeas*, showing again

that the basic meaning is still retained. The dialogue finishes with *vale*, which corresponds to a closing third unit (cf. Schegloff 2007).

- (9) Gymn. Numquid me vis, mater, intro quin eam? ecastor mihi visa amare.
[last dialogue]
Lena. Istoc ergo auris graviter obtundo tuas, ne quem ames. abi intro.
Gymn. *Numquid me vis?* [last exchange]
Lena. *Vt valeas.*
Gymn. *Vale.* [last intervention and act] (Plautus, *Cistellaria*, PDC)
'Gymn. Mother, do you wish anything of me, before I go indoors? Upon my faith, to me she does seem to be in love.
Lena. For this reason, then, it is, that I'm repeatedly dinning it into your ears, not to be in love with any man. Go in-doors.
Gymn. Do you wish anything of me?
Lena. *That you may fare well.*
Gymn. *Fare you well.*' (Ed. Henry Thomas Riley, PDC)

In the following excerpt from Terence's *Hecyra* (10), *vale* is employed as a verb in the final turn, modified by *bene*, and is accompanied by the pronoun *tu* as a subject.

- (10) Ph. Et quidem ego: nam constitui cum quodam hospite me esse ilium converturam.
Pa. Di vertant bene Quod agas.
Ph. *Vale.* [last exchange]
Pa. *Et tu bene vale*, Philotium. [last intervention and act] (Terence, *Hecyra*, PDC)
'PHILOTIS. And I too, for I made an appointment with a certain stranger to meet him.
PARMENO. May the Gods prosper what you undertake!
PHILOTIS. *Farewell!*
PARMENO. *And a kind farewell to you, my dear Philotis.*' (Ed. Henry Thomas Riley, PDC)

Valete also worked to conclude a play politely and address the audience, as seen in (11).

- (11) Mess. (...) nunc, spectators, *valete* et nobis clare plaudite. [last intervention and act of the drama] (Plautus, *Menaechmi*, PDC)
'Messenio. (...) Now, Spectators, *fare you well*, and give us loud applause' (Ed. Henry Thomas Riley, PDC)

18.4.2 *Vale/valete* in Classical Latin

Vale/valete were used in personal or family letters as a closing formula, which is observed in the works of the Golden Age Latin authors⁹ (Ovid, Virgil, Catullus, Cicero, and Caesar). In these attestations, we see a more routinized use, and the allusion to being in good health has been bleached, as seen in (12).

- (12) Qua re cura ut te quam primum videamus. *Vale* [absolute final position] (Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, PDC)

‘So let me see you at the earliest possible moment. Farewell’. (Ed. Evelyn Shuckburgh, PDC)

In fact, when they want to refer to being well or healthy, they add specific comments with this meaning (13). This is very common in Cicero’s *Letters to Terence*, who had poor health (cf. [Gunderson 2007](#) for the double sense of *vale/valete*).

- (13) Scr. Brundisi a.d.iv.Non.Iun.a. TULLIUS TERENTIAE SUAE S.

Si vales, bene est, ego valeo. Valetudinem tuam velim cures diligentissime. Nam mihi et scriptum et nuntiatum est te in febrim subito incidisse. Quod celeriter me fecisti is de Caesaris litteris certiore, fecisti mihi gratum. Item posthac, si quid opus erit, si quid acciderit novi, facies ut sciam. Cura ut valeas vale. (Tullius Cicero, *Epistulae ad Familiares*, PDC)

‘TO TERENTIA (AT ROME) POMPEY’S CAMP IN EPIRUS, 2 JUNE

If you are well, I am glad. I am well. Pray be very careful about your illness: for I have been informed by both letter and messenger that you have suddenly contracted fever. I am much obliged for your prompt information as to Caesar’s despatch. Continue, pray, in future to inform me of any news I ought to know, whatever occurs. *Take care of your health. Good-bye.*’ (Ed. Evelyn Shuckburgh, PDC)

Vale extended its usage: it occasionally served as a closing formula in books, as seen in Caesar’s *De bello Gallico* (14).

- (14) Sed ego nimirum, dum omnes excusationis causas colligo ne cum Caesare conferar, hoc ipsum crimen arrogantiae subeo, quod me iudicio cuiusquam existimem posse cum Caesare comparari. *Vale.* [absolute final position] (Julius Cesar, *De bello Gallico*, book 8, PDC)

‘But, in truth, while I urge every apology, that I may not be compared to Caesar, I incur the charge of vanity, by thinking it possible that I can in the judgment of any one be put in competition with him. *Farewell.*’ (Ed. W. A. McDevitte, PDC)

⁹ In addition, Catullus’s and Virgil’s epitaphs are well known to bid the last farewell (*vale*) to dead people. These funerary poems were imitated later in the Middle Ages (cf. [Fernández and Limón 2017](#)).

Vale/valete were also the preferred formula for concluding letters during the Silver Age (Seneca, Pliny the Younger, and Sidonius Apollinaris). By this time, their routinization had led to the emergence of the verb *valedicere* (15), which continued to be used during the Middle Ages.

- (15) Reges Parthorum non potest quisquam salutare sine munere; tibi *valedicere* non licet gratis. (Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, PDC)
 ‘Kings of the Parthians, no one can greet you without a gift; bidding farewell to you is not allowed without payment’

18.4.3 *Vale/valete* in Late and Medieval Latin

From Late Latin onwards, *vale/valete* became part of the farewell formulae that Christian authors used in letters addressed to believers ((16), (20)) and in prefaces of books conceived as letters to readers ((17), (18)) or patrons; similarly, they could occasionally serve to conclude books (19). Besides *vale/valete*, authors introduced variants such as (*bene*) *valete in Domino* or *valete in Christo* to express friendship with God, and often employed vocatives to convey solidarity (*frater, dilectissimi fratres*).

- (16) *Bene vale, frater, et ora pro nobis* [last act] (Caius Papa, *Epistola*, third century, PL)
 ‘Farewell, brother, and pray for us’
- (17) *Has igitur meas lucubrationes benigne accipies et aequi bonique consules. Vale.* [absolute final position] (Tertuliano, *Liber de oratione, Praefatio, Ad lectorem Panciroli*, third century, PL)
 ‘So, you will kindly receive these little works of mine and advise fairly and well. Farewell’
- (18) *Dico tamen vobis, Valete, orate pro nobis, et jejunate. quia jejunium et eleemosyna semper Dominum ad misericordiam deflexerunt.* [last intervention] (Gregorio de Tours, *Historia Francorum*, sixth century, PL)
 ‘Nevertheless, I say to you: farewell to you all, pray for us and fast, fasting and charity have always inclined the Lord to mercy’
- (19) *Bene valete in Domino.* [last act] (Carlo Magno, *Capitularia*, ninth century, PL)
 ‘Farewell with the Lord’

- (20) dissolve colligationes impietatis, solve fasciculos deprimentes, dimitte eos qui confracti sunt liberos et omne onus disrumpe. *Valete*. [absolute final position] (Alberto Magno, *Epistula*, 13th century, PL)
 ‘Dissolve the bonds of impiety, release the oppressive shackles, let go those who are broken free, and break every burden. Farewell.’

18.4.4 *Vale/valete* in Renaissance and Humanist texts

Vale/valete are documented in poetry (21) since the dawn of the Italian Renaissance, as in Classical times.

- (21) Heu, germana, *vale*, quondam michi vita meumque Lumen in hoc seculo
 (Pietro da Moglio Bologna, 1383, PDC)
 ‘Hey, sister, farewell, you were once my life and my Light in this century.’

Vale also continues to be found in letters and prefaces, although generally without mentioning God (or at least that is the case in Humanist authors¹⁰). For instance, *bene vale* or *vale* appeared quite often in letters by Erasmus of Rotterdam or Luis Vives. When they wanted to give meaning to these forms, they resorted to the construction *ut valeas*.

Moreover, Humanist authors had a great interest in Latin becoming a language of communication within Europe, which gave rise to student *colloquia* to teach Latin including strategies and expressions to manage everyday situations (cf. [Del Rey 2015](#)). In Spain, the most successful works were *Colloquia* by Erasmus of Rotterdam and *Linguae latinae execertiatio* by Juan Luis Vives. Indeed, the former was taken as a stylistic role model for Castilian Renaissance dialogues ([Del Rey 2015](#)). In his *Colloquia Familiaria* (1522), Erasmus of Rotterdam suggests a series of variants of *vale* to bid farewell to someone (22).

- (22) *Valete omnes*. ‘Goodbye everyone.’
Bene vale. ‘Good bye.’
Cura, ut quam rectissime valeas. ‘Try to be as honest as possible.’
Iubeo te bene valere. ‘I wish you the best.’
Vale, ut dignus es. ‘Farewell, as you are worthy.’
Vale ut meritis. ‘Farewell, well deserved.’
In hoc biduum valebis. ‘You will be fine in a couple of days.’

Thus, *vale/valete* may have been used by speakers of high-status sociolects, especially in court circles in which Latin was the *lingua franca*.

¹⁰ Likewise, it continues to be used in Church Latin, especially in letters and prefaces, and in some cases as a closure of works.

18.4.5 Persistence of the Latin *vale/valete* as loanwords throughout the history of Spanish

During the Renaissance, *vale/valete* were adopted as loanwords in many Romance languages, including Spanish. They appear in the same genres as in Latin (letters, prefaces, various books). In corpus data, *vale*, and occasionally *valete* (23), are chiefly attested in letters (24) and prologues (25), alongside the endings of books, like in the *Quixote* (26).

- (23) Uestro fray diego de çamora vino aquí; si tan bien libró los negocios que traýa como despachó vnas calenturas que le vinieron, sé que va bien librado. *Valete*. [absolute final position] (Hernando del Pulgar, *Letras*, 1470–1485, CDH)
- ‘Your brother Diego de Zamora came here; if he handled the matters he brought with him as well as he dealt with some fevers that came upon him, I know he is well off. *Valete*’
- (24) En fe desta creencia te aviso, hermana mía, trabajes mucho en ser cuerda en tus palabras, recatada en tu vida, honesta en tu persona, verdadera en tu escritura (...). *Vale, felix*. [final position] (Antonio de Guevara, *Reloj de príncipes*, 1521–1531, CDH).
- ‘In faith of this belief, I advise you, my sister, strive greatly to be prudent in your words, demure in your life, honest in your person, and truthful in your writing (...). *Vale, felix*’
- (25) Recibe, amado lector, benignamente mi trabajo (...). *Vale*. [absolute final position] (Luis Méndez de Torres, *Tratado breve de la cultivación*, 1586, CDH)
- ‘Receive, beloved reader, my work kindly. *Vale*’
- (26) (At the end of the book) *Vale*. (Miguel de Cervantes, *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, 1605, CDH)

In addition, during the 16th and 17th centuries, *vale* is documented in fictional genres. In these cases ((27), (28)), *vale* appears in dialogues, which suggests that it must have been understood by the audience, despite the fact that it was not as popular as *adiós*, the most common formula used to say goodbye during these centuries. The instance in (27) belongs to a song in which the author suggests saying *vale* ‘bye-bye’ to enemies. The farewell exchange in (28) come from novels of staunch Spanish humanists.

- (27) E yo os aconsejo y os digo que como del enemigo procuréis huir de allí. Así que (...) vos podéis dezirle, *Vale*. [final position] (Sebastián de Horozco, *Cancionero*, 1540–79, CDH)

'And I advise you and tell you that, just as from the enemy, you should seek to flee from there. So (...) you can tell him: *Farewell*.'

- (28) Fabricio: Miren vuestas mercedes que mañana a la noche se han de servir de ir a mi casa.

Leonardo: Vuesa merced provea buen fuego, que no haremos falta. *Vale*. [absolute final position] (Antonio de Esclava, *Noches de invierno*, 1609, CDH)

'Fabricio. Tomorrow your worship should come to my house.

Leonardo. You should provide us with good fire. *Farewell*.'

This usage is frequent in Classical Spanish and at the beginning of the Modern Spanish period, but decreases significantly throughout the 19th century (see Figure 18.3).

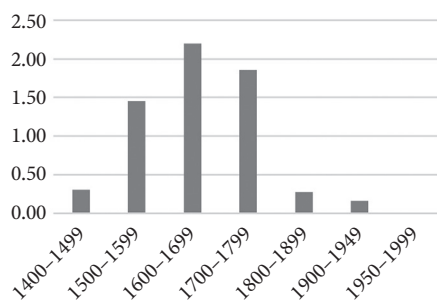


Figure 18.3 Relative^a frequency of *vale/valete* as loanwords in Spanish in CDH

^a Relative frequency indicates the number of examples in relation to the total number of words per each century.

The emergence and rise of *vale/valete* in Medieval and Classical Spanish may be attributed to two main causes. The first is related to Humanism, which involved a return to the aesthetics and worldview of Classical times. This had a significant influence on many Spanish authors in the 15th and, especially, the 16th century (González 2003). The second reason has to do with the development of literary techniques and constructions through the expansion of the range of genres written in Spanish. During this period, wealthy citizens became more educated and began producing more written works in the vernacular language. Simultaneously, members of religious orders started to use Spanish to ensure better understanding by their followers. These authors borrowed expressions from Latin by adapting Latin models to the new written discourse traditions in Spanish (Kabatek 2018; Del Rey 2023). Among others they took the well-known *vale/valete* to conclude

prologues and letters. By contrast, some centuries later, the decrease in use may be connected to the Enlightenment's rejection of forms linked to the *ancien régime*: in fact, *vale/valete* were associated with court circles (RAE 1739 in NTLLE). Neoclassicism authors like Fernández de Moratín opted for new forms like *cuídate/cuídese* (see Section 18.5).

18.5 *Cuídate/cuídese* as a farewell routine in the history of Spanish

This section firstly provides a general overview on the acquisition and diffusion of the farewell function in *cuídate/cuídese* forms. Secondly, it examines key aspects of this process, specifically the frequency of use and the pragmatic functions as they relate to changes in the types of intervention.

18.5.1 From adverse situations to general good wishes and farewells in letters and conversations

Cuídate (informal second-person singular) and *cuídese* (formal second-person plural) are the imperative forms¹¹ of the pronominal verb *cuidarse*. The verb *cuidar* originates from the Latin *cogitare* 'to think' (Corominas and Pascual 1983), although it is indirectly related to the Latin *curare* 'to watch over, take care'. *Cuidar* meant 'to pay attention to' and 'watch over' (e.g. *cuidar(se) de los peligros*), then extended its meaning to 'being careful when carrying out sth' (e.g. *cuidar los negocios*), and later to 'look after someone' (e.g. *cuidar a un enfermo* 'to take care of an ill person'). By the second half of the 18th century, this latter meaning develops a reflexive use in the sense of attending to one's health (29) (cf. Domínguez 1853 in NTLLE; RAE 1869 in NTLLE).

- (29) El enfermo *se cuida*, se repone; *Un nuevo plan de vida se propone*. (Félix María de Samaniego, *Fábulas*, 1781–1784, CDH)

'The sick man is taking care of himself, he is recovering']

The polite uses of *cuídate/cuídese* derives from this last meaning. They are typically used when the listener is ill or might fall sick (due to bad weather, health problems, old age, etc.), or when the listener is going through difficult times (e.g. living far from home) or unstable situations (riots, war). In the following attestation (30), the suggestion to take care of oneself is expressed in a doctor–patient interaction.

¹¹ In the corpus data, 106 occurrences of *cuídate* were retrieved, along with 23 occurrences of *cuídese* and 3 of *cuidaos*.

- (30) abrazandole le dixo: (...) *cuidese Vmd.* que todavía esa cara no está buena. (...) *Cuidaros mas* y no os expongáis a este frío, y abur. [last intervention] [last act] (*Diario de Madrid*, ‘Aprehension Pathologica’, 1792, HD)
 ‘Hugging him he said to him: (...) Take care of yourself, your face is not yet well (...) Take better care and do not expose yourselves to this cold.’

Quite often these politeness strategies are associated with farewells when interlocutors have a close relationship. Thus, they soon start to be used as farewell routines, especially in letters, wherein these forms may have been employed as a way of expressing affection from a distance. In these cases, they are followed by other verbs usually with the *y* (‘and’) conjunction (coordination) ((31), (33)).

- (31) *Cuidese V. bien* y disponga de su afectísimo amigo y servidor. G. M. N. [last act] (*Semanario de Zaragoza*, 17/12/1798, HD)
 ‘Take good care of yourself well and consider your most affectionate friend and servant.’
- (32) ¡Te quiero con toda mi alma! Mi alma contigo siempre. Cuídate. Ven pronto. (Telegraph, 1823, HD)
 ‘I love you so much. My soul is with you always. Take care. Come soon’
- (33) *Cuídate* y sé feliz, como lo desea tu compañero y amigo. B. B. [last act] (A letter, 1838, HD)
 ‘Take care and be happy, as your colleague and friend wishes.’

In dialogues from novels, however, these forms continue to be linked to adverse situations over most of the 20th century (34).

- (34) Marcela replied to Ellias who caught a cold:
 ¡Pues *cuídese* usted, por Dios! [last act] (Enrique Jardiel Poncela, *Angelina o el honor de un brigadier*, 1934, CDH)
 ‘So take care of yourself, by God!’

Indeed, it is not until the last decades of the 20th century that *cuidate* became a farewell routine in conversations. This form also conveys good wishes for the listener; however, they are not necessarily motivated by a specific reason ((35), (36)). Rather, it behaves as an act that can occupy the absolute final position (36).

- (35) *Cuídate* mucho. Besos. Senta. [last act] (Inés Palou, *Carne apaleada*, 1975, CDH)
 ‘Take a lot of care, Kisses. Senta.’

- (36) —Adiós, Jesse. Cuídate. [absolute final position] (Javier García Sánchez, *La historia más triste*, 1991, CDH)

‘Bye, Jesse. Take care.’

18.5.2 Key aspects in the pragmaticalization as a farewell routine

Cuídese/cuídate have been attested as polite forms since the end of the 18th century, when the Enlightenment encouraged the replacement of old forms related to the *ancien régime* with new ways of satisfying expressive needs in everyday life.¹² Since then, their frequency has increased, particularly over the last few decades, where they have evolved into farewell routines in conversations (Figure 18.4).

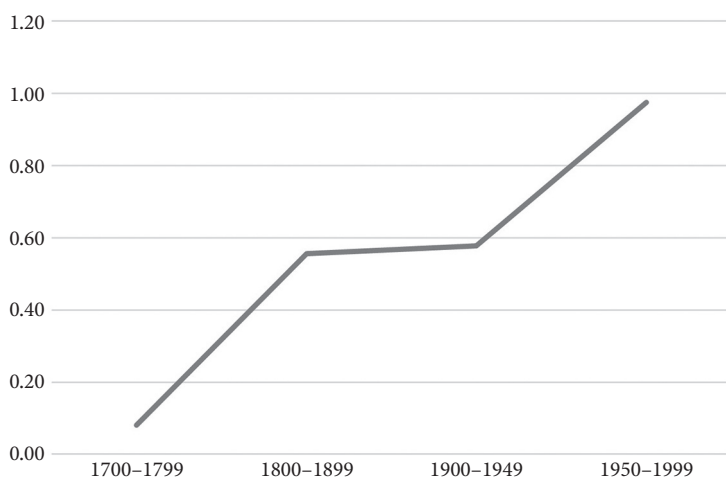


Figure 18.4 Relative frequency of *cuídate/cuídese* in CDH

In examining their pragmatic functions, I have observed that the mixed function (good wishes and farewells) is attested from the beginning, although it became

¹² Throughout the 19th century another form, *salud* (literally meaning ‘health’), began to be used to as a greeting and farewell, especially among left-wing comrades who might imitate the French greeting *salut et fraternité* [‘welfare and brotherhood’], initially used by revolutionaries and later by trade unionists and freethinkers. *Salud* became very popular during the Spanish Civil War when republican soldiers and supporters used it, typically accompanied by a raised fist (Malraux 1937: 207). Its use remained closely associated with this ideology, as seen in letters written by Republican soldiers (Pardo forthcoming), unlike the French *salut*, which is a common form. The Spanish republican *salud* seems akin to the Latin *vale* (‘stay healthy, vigorous’), which might reflect the interpretation by those who used it. Nevertheless, the same etymon (*salus*, *-tis*, related to *salvus*, *-vī*) evolved into the Castilian Medieval greeting *salud* (Corominas and Pascual 1983). This was occasionally used in letters with an ambiguous interpretation—mostly greeting in the name of God and wishes for salvation in the name of God, but also wishes for good health—similar to the Old French *salut* (TLFi; Lanham (1974) in Zieliński 2021: 31).

much more prominent in conversations during the 1980s and the 1990s (Figure 18.5), where the meaning of good wishes was very often blurred.

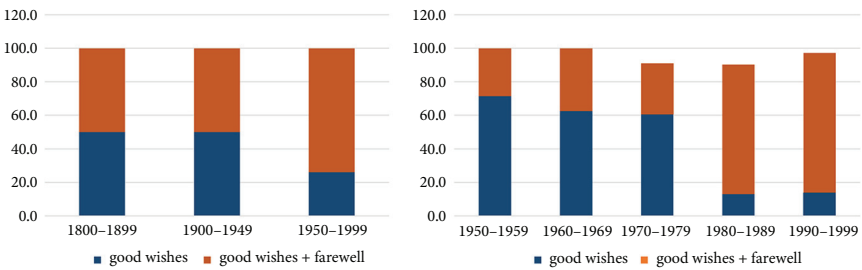


Figure 18.5 Relative frequency of *cuidate/cuidese* according to functions^a

^a Relative frequency here shows the number of examples of each function compared to the total number of examples.

Both functions (good wishes/good wishes + farewell) go hand in hand with a particular type of intervention:¹³ it goes from being a reactive intervention (wherein an unfavourable situation was previously discussed or at least mentioned) to being an initiating intervention (the altruist desire that the other stays healthy). Regarding position, their presence in the middle of a conversation decreases at the same time as their frequency in the last intervention increases and reaches the absolute final position (see Table 18.3), generally reserved for traditional farewell formulae (e.g. *adiós, hasta luego*). This movement goes hand in hand with the change of intervention-type: it went from reactive intervention (an unfavourable situation was previously discussed or at least mentioned) to an initiative intervention (the altruist desire that the other stays healthy).

18.6 Spanish *vale* as a marker of agreement and as a (pre)closing

This section first explores the pragmaticalization of the Spanish *vale* as a poly-functional pragmatic marker, with particular emphasis on its role as a marker of agreement. Secondly, it delves into the acquisition of the farewell function within conversations.

18.6.1 Pragmaticalization of *vale* as a marker of agreement

Vale started being used as an agreement marker during the mid-1950s according to attestations in fictional works. The form *vale* corresponds to the third-person

¹³ See note b to Table 18.2.

Table 18.3 Attestations in elaborated orality texts in CDH in relation to discourse units

elaborated orality texts	1700–1799	1800–1899	1900–1949	1950–1979	1980–1989	1990–1999
first dialogue						
previous dialogues		1	5	9	3	1
last dialogue		1	2	3	3	5
last exchange		2	3	2	4	5
last intervention		2	4	3	10	7
absolute final position				2	7	13

singular present tense of the polysemic¹⁴ verb *valer* ('to be worth', 'to cost', 'to be useful', 'to be valid'). The pragmatic extension of acceptance seems to derive from the specific meaning 'to be useful or effective', seen from the speaker's point of view—a subjective interpretation. This can be observed in the bridging contexts, particularly in conditional or concessive sentences (37) and in replies to questions (38).

- (37) —Si el señor lo considera bien pagado, *vale*. (Delibes, *Aún es de día*, 1949)
'If the gentleman considers it is well paid, fine.'

- (38) —¿Es un buen resultado?
—*Vale*, pero creo que debió meter gol. (*Marca*, 16.1.1950, HD)
'Is this a good result?'
'It works, but he should have scored a goal.'

Its earliest attestations as a marker of agreement are found in the second part of adjacency pairs, where the speaker uses *vale* to accept a proposal, an offer (39), a fact (40), or a supposition (41). In these cases, the interlocutor agrees by saying *vale* ('ok').

- (39) —Te acompaño hasta el cruce. ¿*Vale*?
—*Vale*. (Martín Vigil, *Una chabola de Bilbao*, 1961)
'I go with you until the crossroads, ok?'
'Ok.'
- (40) —Sólo tenemos un real.
—*Vale*. (García Pavón, *Cuentos republicanos*, 1961)
'We have only a penny.'
'Okay.'
- (41) "Aquí el amigo... se andará por los setenta y dos. ¿*Vale*?" Ignacio simuló pasmo y contestó: "*Vale*". (José María Gironella, *Un millón de muertos*, 1961)
'This guy must be around seventy-two, ok?'
Ignacio feigned astonishment and replied: "Ok".

¹⁴ The core meaning of the verb *valer* from Medieval Castilian onwards was 'to be worth' (Arrington and Melis 2015). Since then, the meaning 'to be useful/to serve' has been part of the intricate polysemy of this verb. Around the 18th century, it began to gain more importance as it extended to additional uses (e.g. *valerse de una herramienta* 'to use a tool'). Much later, by the mid-20th century, it was applied to new contexts, such as manual jobs and commercial transactions), significantly increasing its use.

The Colombian linguist Luis Flórez (1966) noticed that *vale* was commonly used in transactional interactions in shops and pubs to acknowledge customers' requests in mid-1960s Madrid. A decade later it had not yet spread widely across sociolects, as evidenced by a rich businessman, Carlos Hondero in *La gangrena*, who said, 'This word annoyed me. It was expanding but it seemed to me artificial' (Salisachs 1975 in CDH). By then, young speakers were opting for *vale* as a preferred form to express acceptance and it became part of *cheli*, a youth slang that developed in Madrid throughout the mid-1970s and expanded to other parts of Spain and age groups in the following decades (Llopis 2024). Given the significant expansion of *cheli* in the 1980s, *vale* caught on in colloquial speech. Two decades later, it had become a very popular pragmatic marker (see Figure 18.6).

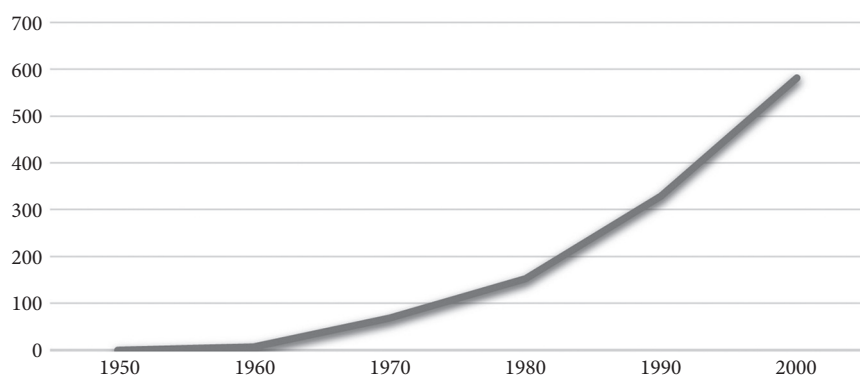


Figure 18.6 Relative frequency of *vale* as a pragmatic marker

During these decades, *vale* developed many pragmatic extensions, most of which are related to the interactive (showing comprehension, phatic marker) and textual (preclosing, topic change, continuation, reformulation, turn starting) dimensions and only one to the modal dimension (strengthening) (Llopis under revision). Thus, it became a very polyfunctional pragmatic marker¹⁵ in colloquial conversations and semi-informal interactions. In other terms, it underwent polypragmaticalization (Dostie 2004: 33). The diffusion of these functions is shown in Figure 18.7.

Interactive response functions correspond to the acceptance of proposals, facts, evaluations, and so on (39–41 instances); in total, they represent 799 of 1,061

¹⁵ The English equivalent marker *ok* displays a similar inventory of functions (cf. Couper-Kuhlen 2021).

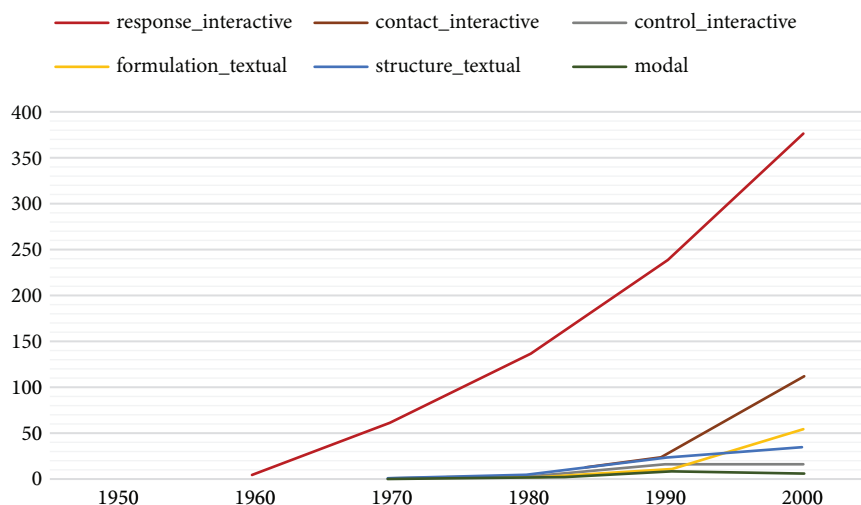


Figure 18.7 Relative frequency of macrofunctions fulfilled by *vale*

occurrences (75.3 per cent). Structural functions, including starting a conversation, topic changing, and (pre)closing, only make up 77 occurrences, out of which 63 belong to the (pre)closing function (5.9 per cent) (42–44 instances). As seen below, this function has been recognized by researchers since the 1990s, but despite its current use, it is underrepresented in corpus data (cf. [Cestero and Moreno 2008](#)).

18.6.2 Pragmaticalization of *vale* as a farewell in Spanish

Vale is attested in farewell interactions and fulfils one of the two following functions. Firstly, it can function as a preclosing marker that allows the opportunity to add a comment, often in combination with *bueno*, *pues nada*, *y eso* ('well', 'anyway', 'and all that stuff') ([Gallardo 1996](#)). Secondly, *vale* can also work as a closing marker used alongside farewell routines such as *hasta luego* or *adiós*, or in their stead ([Casalmiglia and Tusón 1999](#); [Serrano 2004](#); [Vila and Faya 2016](#); [Pihler, Collewaert, and Vande 2020](#)).

Nonetheless, it is not clear where this pragmatic function originated, especially when taking into account that the function of agreement is the primary and basic one. The answer leads us to consider the dialogical structure for closing conversations. [Schegloff and Sacks \(1973\)](#) distinguished four phases (see also [Gallardo 1996](#); [Schegloff 2007](#)): (a) speakers have to close a topic or make an arrangement,

(b) once this (possible) last topic is accepted, (c) they can move to the farewell turn, (d) which implies at least one response (Figure 18.8).



Figure 18.8 Structure of farewell dialogues

Considering this structure, *vale* would have initially served to signal acceptance of an arrangement or topic under discussion, and later, it would have moved to the farewell phase. This could well be the case; however, in corpus data, the acceptance and the farewell turns are often integrated into a single turn. For instance, in (42) the lieutenant announces he is going to leave his colleague and begins the farewell dialogue. He says he smells marihuana, but the sergeant does not agree because he smells *paella* ('a traditional Spanish dish'). The lieutenant accepts that, says goodbye and closes the conversation.

- (42) Teniente: yo voy al campamento/ a ver al coronel/ (()) que hoy hay pollo al chilindrón / y ¿no huele uste(d) a marihuana?
 Sargento: noo/ huelo a paella
 Teniente: ¿paella?/ bueno/ *vale/ adiós* [last intervention] (La quinta del porro, 1980, COLFI)
 'Lieutenant: I'm off to the military camp/ to see the colonel/ (()) there's chicken today and don't you smell of marihuana?
 Sergeant: Noo/ I smell of paella.
 Lieutenant: Paella? / well / ok/ bye.'

The following examples proceed from real conversations and present similar structures. In these closing dialogues *vale* tends to appear along with farewell routines such as *hasta luego* (43), *hasta la vista* (44), and *adiós*. In (44) speaker A thinks that a telegram always brings bad news, and speaker D agrees with A. It is not necessarily a new acceptance of the acceptance, but she/he says *vale hasta la vista* ('ok see you').

- (43) H2: Ya hablaremos sobre ese tema.
 H1: Pues nada...
 H2: ¡Vale! ¡Hasta luego! [last intervention] (CORLEC)
 H2: We will discuss this.
 H1: All right...
 H2: Ok, see you

- (44) A: § un telegrama↑ siempre es malo/ lo que dice siempre es malo§
 D: § siempre es malo§
 A: § puede ser más malo o menos malo/ pero siempre es malo§
 D: § sí sí sí¬ bueno§
 A: § vale↓ [*hasta la vista*] [last exchange]
 D: [*hasta luego*]§
 C: § (a)dios (VALESCO 2002)
 'A: § a telegram ↑ is always a bad thing/ whatever it says is bad§
 D: § it's always bad§
 A: § it can be more or less bad but it is always bad§
 D: § yeah¬ well§
 A: § ok↓ [see you]
 D: [see you]§
 C: § bye'

All the cases containing a preclosing function are located within the last dialogue, in the last exchange and/or in the last intervention. This relative final discourse position has been growing considerably over the last few decades, likely due to young speakers (see [Section 18.6.1](#)).

18.7 Discussion

After examining the cases under study, I will assess whether they can be classified as pragmatic cycles according to the characterization given in [Section 18.2](#).

18.7.1 From Lat. *vale* to Sp. *cuídate*: a pragmatic cycle

As explained above, both instances of pragmaticalization (i.e. that of the Latin *vale/valete* and that of the Spanish *cuídate/cuídese*) involve a similar source meaning that developed similar pragmatic functions. Their source meanings are pragmatically related via implicature, as the action of 'taking care of oneself' expressed in *cuidarse* is a necessary step so as to 'be in sound health or be well' (*vale/valete*). The pragmatic extensions derived from these meanings look alike not only with respect to their functions but also with respect to the contexts, genres, and registers in which they are used. They do differ in the stage reached during the process, which is not complete in the case of *cuídate* ([Table 18.4](#)).

Both extensions developed gradually: they start as expressions of good wishes to the addressee in desiderative acts and end up as farewell routines. Therefore, the linguistic change that occurred in the Latin *vale/valete* is indeed renewed in the Spanish *cuídate/cuídese* many centuries later, as a sort of a wave or recurrence of a cline ([Scivoletto 2020, 2025](#)). This corresponds to an onomasiological

Table 18.4 Functions of *vale* from Classical/Old Latin and of *cuidate* in current Spanish

Latin <i>vale/valete</i>		Spanish <i>cuidese/cuidate/cuidaos</i>	
Good wishes	(+)	Good wishes	+
Good wishes + Farewell	+	Good wishes + Farewell	+
Farewell	+	Farewell	–/+

cycle (Hansen 2014, 2018a, 2020b) or, more precisely, an onomasiological micro-cycle (Hansen, this volume).

This case also fits well with other features of pragmatic cycles (cf. Pons and Llopis 2020). Both processes took place across distant time spans: *vale* in Old-Classical Latin, as opposed to *cuidate* in Modern Spanish. However, the use of *vale* as a farewell routine was borrowed to be used in letters and prologues around the 15th century, while it was also present in dialogues in Humanist and court circles. Later, the Enlightenment rejected forms linked to the *ancien régime*, marking the beginning of the end for *vale*, which underwent a significant decline (see Section 18.4.5), while *cuidese/cuidate* began to replace it. Beyond cultural factors motivating preferences, what this replacement implies is that innovating speakers may have kept in mind the specific pattern activated in *vale* and consequently proceeded to replace it with a new one based on analogical thinking¹⁶ (cf. Fischer 2010 for analogy as cause and mechanism).

In addition, both *vale* and *cuidate* also match with regards to their variational profile. They are characteristic marks of orality belonging to a standard register, as they are employed across a wide range of contexts, not limited to informal settings. This is particularly pronounced in the case of *vale*, which was prevalent during Classical and Old Latin periods.

18.7.2 From Latin *vale* to Spanish *vale*: is this a pragmatic cycle?

Owing to the emergence and popularity of the Spanish agreement marker *vale*, the question remains whether this new marker is connected to the old farewell *vale* inherited from Latin (cf. Calvo 1983). Serrano (2004) states:

[el *vale* latino] reapareció en la literatura de los siglos XVI y XVII. Sin embargo, aún desconocemos qué sucede con el uso de este marcador en los siglos

¹⁶ Indeed, the analogous constructions were part of the speaker synchronic system and occurred in similar communicative situations (cf. Fischer 2010).

posteriores y *por qué lo volvemos a utilizar ahora en un contexto discursivo tan similar*. (My italics)

‘[(Latin *vale*) reappeared in the literature of the 16th and the 17th centuries. However, we still don’t know what happens with the use of this marker in later centuries and *why we are using it again now in such a similar discursive context*.’ (My translation)]

These questions have remained hitherto unexplored; hence, this study aims to provide insight by considering whether it can be identified as a pragmatic cycle or not.

Furthermore, I will discuss whether the pragmaticalization of each marker fits the characteristic features of a pragmatic cycle. Both items originate from the same etymon (*valeo*, *-ere*), but they have different source meanings: ‘to be well/healthy’ (referring to a person) in Latin *vale*, in contrast to ‘to be useful/to serve’ (referring to an object/an action) in Spanish *vale*. The meaning of ‘to be healthy’ was already becoming obsolete in Vulgar Latin (cf. Niemeyer 1954). Later on, in the evolution into Castilian, it did not become part of the polysemy of the verb *valer* (see Section 18.6.1). In the same vein, there are remarkable differences in pragmatic functions: the Latin *vale* usually functioned as a farewell (the basic function), while the Spanish *vale* mainly fulfils the function of acceptance. Additionally, it has also developed several pragmatic-discourse extensions, which include the contextual function of closing conversations.

Certainly, each function was acquired in a process that took place at different points in time. The Latin *vale* originated in Old Latin and was maintained as a common verbal routine for centuries. Much later, around the 15th century, it was adopted into Spanish and remained in use in specific circles and genres until the first half of the 20th century; by then, it was only known by educated people who used it only rarely in letters. On the other hand, the Spanish *vale* (‘ok’) emerged as a marker of agreement at around the mid-20th century—very probably earlier—in low-status sociolects (Carnicer 1967). Little by little it spread across society, especially among young people in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, at the beginning of the 20th century, *vale* had become a very popular routine in conversations.

To sum up, only a vague semantic relation can be glimpsed at a very abstract level in relation to the source meaning (‘to be healthy’/‘to be useful’ = ‘something positive’). Likewise, the pragmatic function of farewell plays a different role in each one (basic function/contextual function), only its origin is somehow related, as it seems to be rooted in strategies of positive politeness in both instances, namely wishing good health in the Latin *vale* and showing agreement in the Spanish *vale* (see Section 18.1). Accordingly, the characteristic analogy of a cycle lies here in an abstract pattern of a cline or in a schema (Fischer 2010). This renewal is better depicted by the image of a spiral in which the starting and ending point only

coincide partially (cf. Scivoletto 2020). Following Scivoletto (this volume), it would be classified as a spiral of a constructionalization. Conversely, considering both items are formally and functionally related, it would represent a semasiological micro-cycle according to Hansen (this volume; cf. Hansen 2014, 2018a). In my view, this diversity should not be identified with standard cases of cyclicity; rather, it would be preferable to distinguish degrees of prototypicality.

18.7.3 Prototypical and peripheral cases in pragmatic cyclicity

Following a cognitivist approach, prototypical and peripheral cases can be distinguished based on varying degrees of resemblance between the source meaning and the pragmatic function of each instance (see Table 18.5).

Table 18.5 Degrees of prototypicality and resemblance in cycle cases

Degree of prototypicality	Degree of resemblance	Example
prototypical	high	<i>rogo/quaeso</i> > <i>chiedo/prego</i> <i>vale</i> > <i>cuídate/cuídese</i> <i>ainz</i> > <i>plútot</i>
peripheral	medium	<i>macho</i> ‘male’ > <i>tío</i> ‘uncle’
	low	the Latin <i>vale</i> > the Spanish <i>vale</i>

When the repetition of a change takes quite a similar source meaning and results in a similar pragmatic extension, we find ourselves before a prototypical case, such as it occurs with the Latin *vale* in relation to the Spanish *cuídate* (‘to be healthy’/‘to take care of one self’ > ‘bye’), among other cases described in literature (e.g. *rogo/quaeso* > *chiedo/prego* (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a); *ainz* > *plútot* (Hansen, this volume)). If they are somehow related either at a more abstract level with respect to the meaning or pragmatic function—for example, different core meanings or basic functions—then they can be considered peripheral cases. This is the case of *macho* (‘male’) and *tío* (‘uncle’), which as vocatives share the abstract semantic feature of ‘animal/human being’ (Pons and Llopis 2020). Finally, the cases will be more peripheral when the mismatch affects meaning as well as pragmatic extension, as exemplified by the cycle between the Latin *vale* (‘to be well’ > ‘a farewell’) and the Spanish *vale* (‘to be useful’ > ‘acceptance/contextually ‘a farewell’). Their meanings resemble one another at an abstract level (‘something positive’), and the same goes for the basic pragmatic functions (‘positive politeness’ < ‘polite farewell’/‘agreement/acceptance’). Besides, the pragmatic function of farewell is contextual in Spanish *vale*. Hence, these degrees of prototypicality build a continuum among cycle cases according to the semantic-pragmatic resemblance.

18.8 Final remarks

This study aimed to contribute to cyclicity research chiefly by examining in detail some potential cases in Spanish farewell routines. The pragmatic motivation of wishing someone well or good health gave rise to a new construction for bidding farewell in Latin (*vale*). Not surprisingly, this cline reappeared at the dawn of the Modern period in Spanish with the construction *cuídate/cuídese*, as attested in other Romance (Fr. *prend soin de toi*) and non-Romance languages (Eng. *take care (of yourself)*). Such recurrence is not present in the Spanish *vale*. Although both pragmatic makers proceed from the same etymon, the polysemy of *valere* was restructured in the course of the evolution to the extent that it practically lost its source meaning ('to be well'). Thus, the pragmaticalization cycle can only be catalogued as such when considering the supposed resemblance at a more abstract level. This brings one to conclude there is a need to distinguish degrees of resemblance in the content and context meaning (Hansen 2014). In addition, this study highlights that cultural factors can play a relevant role not only in the preference for certain forms (*vale* in Humanism) but also in the emergence of new forms reminiscent of the old ones (*cuídate/cuídese* in the Enlightenment). The final issue underlying this analysis points to the need to compare similar instances of pragmaticalization that occurred in other languages. This would shed light on the potential influence of language contact as a cause of potential chains of cycle cases in Romance languages (e.g. Cat. *cuidat*; Fr. *prend soin*; It. (*abbi*) *cura di te* or *stai bene*; Sp. *cuídate*/Cat. *salut*; Fr. *salut*; Sp. *salud*; Ro. *salut*). This point deserves further research in the future.

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