Grammaticalization and (inter)subjectification in the evolution of the Italian negative particle *mica*

Jacqueline Visconti (University of Genoa)

The development of the Italian negative particle *mica*, like French *pas*, from nouns such as Latin mīca(m) 'crumb' and passu(m) 'step' offers a straightforward example of grammaticalization, i.e. the development of a lexical category into a grammatical / functional one. This paper investigates the diachrony of *mica as* an increase in "intersubjectivity", intended as "the way in which natural languages, in their structure and their normal manner of operation, provide for the locutionary agent's expression of his or her awareness of the addresse's attitudes and beliefs" (Traugott 2003; cf. also Traugott forthcoming).

The first part of the paper examines data from the XIV to the XIX centuries. Three main trends are identified: (i) an increase of dialogical contexts from the XVII century onwards; (ii) a parallel decrease of monological and contrastive contexts; (iii) a decrease of the cases where the link with the preceding co-text is explicitly activated, as opposed to prompted by inferrable elements of the preceding co-text. The combination of these trends identifies a cline, from a cluster of monological contexts in which p is discourse-old by virtue of explicit textual evocation to a cluster of dialogical cases in which an increasing amount of inferencing on behalf of the interlocutors is required. Such a cline is indicative of a more general shift in the use of *mica*: from a "textual" mode, pertaining to the level of text-construction, to an "interpersonal" mode, centered on the locutor-interlocutor interaction (the terminology is from Halliday & Hasan 1976).

This trend is confirmed by analysis of Present Day Italian data in the second part of the paper, where *mica* is shown to acquire both a polyphonic and a mitigating function in interrogative contexts. The role of the rethoric of counter-expectation is highlighted in favoring the use of *mica* in contexts in which it will develop such polyphonic and intersubjective polysemies.

The last section discusses the theoretical implications of the results, focusing on the relationship between grammaticalization and intersubjectification.

References

Halliday M.A. K. And Ruqaiya Hasan. 1976.*Cohesion in English* London, Longman.

Hansen, Maj-Britt Mosegaard & Visconti Jacqueline. in print. On reinforced negation in French and Italian (Colloque International sur Perspectives Contrastives et Grammatisalisation, University of Friburg, 3 October 2006), *Studies in Pragmatics*, Oxford, Elsevier.

Traugott, Elizabeth. 2003. From subjectification to intersubjectification. In Raymond Hickey (ed.), Motives for Language Change. Cambridge, CUP: 124-139.

Traugott, Elizabeth. forthcoming. From ideational to interpersonal. A reassessment In Hubert Cuyckens et al. Subjectification, intersubjectification and grammaticalization, Berlin Mouton the Gruyter.

Data

Letteratura Italiana Zanichelli, CD ROM, Pasquale Stoppelli and Eugenio Picchi (eds.), Zanichelli (= LIZ).

Tesoro della Lingua Italiana delle Origini, CNR, electronic data base <http://tlio.ovi.cnr.it/TLIO> (= TLIO).

http://wwwling.arts.kuleuven.be/nrg4/

NUNC-IT Generic I (www.corpora.unito.it)

C-ORAL-ROM. Integrated Reference Corpora for Spoken Romance Languages, Emanuela Cresti and Massimo Moneglia (eds.), Amsterdam, John Benjamins.