Chapter 27
Pragmatics and language change
Elizabeth Closs Traugott

1. Introduction

Language is always in flux. Over time new patterns can be observed that are either minor modifications to the linguistic system, as when the meaning of a lexical item changes, or major ones, as when word order changes occur. That language change occurs primarily as a result of acquisition is uncontroversial. There are, however, very different theories and discourses about how to interpret this observation. To simplify, one view assumes that change is internal or endogenous, in other words that grammars change (Kiparsky 1968) and focuses mainly on syntactic change (e.g. Lightfoot 1998): meaning change is hypothesized to be derivative of syntactic change. On this view the child is born with a rich innate universal grammar (UG) and passively selects the relevant aspects of this grammar based on input prior to the “critical period” of puberty. A representative statement is: “A grammar grows in a child from some initial state (UG), when she is exposed to primary linguistic data” (Lightfoot 2003: 107). An innovation by one child counts as a change. A competing view is that usage changes and language acquisition occurs throughout life. Change is not only internal but also external, driven by social factors and language users who are active participants in negotiation of linguistic patterning, especially meaning: “languages don’t change: people change language” (Croft 2000: 4). On this view, innovation by the individual is not change. “Changes … are the historical events in a linguistic tradition by which practices of speaking vary over time” (Andersen 2001: 228).

Since pragmatics is largely the study of language in use, the second approach to language change is clearly the most germane. In the study of synchronic pragmatics there is a continuum between approaches that are based in the linguistic system and those that based in social factors such as ideology and demographics. Early work on historical pragmatics tended to privilege an “internal” view, even though speakers and addressees involved in communication are regularly invoked. In this work the clause or sentence is seen as the relevant contextual unit of language. Representative works in this tradition tend to be neoGricean (see Traugott 2004 for discussion), though a few are based in Relevance Theory (see especially Papafragou 2000; also Groefsema 1995; Nicolle 1997, Koch 2004). More recently there has been a shift toward interactional approaches with discourses and genres as the relevant contextual unit of language (see the Journal of Historical Pragmatics and Jucker and Taavitsainen Forthcoming). Here I discuss work in both the more logical and more interactional traditions, with emphasis on the semanticization of pragmatics. In section 2 I consider mainly historical neoGricean approaches to implicatures and inferences, with particular attention to the question of how pragmatics comes to be semanticized into expressions. In section 3 I turn to subjectification and intersubjectification, and in section 4 to “pragmaticalization” of expressions. The main unit of analysis in all cases is the “co-text”, broadly defined as linguistic context.¹

¹ For the distinction between linguistic “co-text” and situational “context”, see Brown and Yule (1983).
2. Implicatures and inferences

It is generally agreed that if an expression has two meanings A and B, B “often comes into existence because a regularly occurring context supports an inference-driven contextual enrichment of A to B … this contextual sense may become lexicalized to the point where it need no longer be supported by a given context” (Evans and Wilkins (2000: 550). Evans and Wilkins call such contexts “bridging contexts”. Enfield (2003) modeled them as in Figure I (simplified):

Stage 2 is regarded as one in which implicating and meaning ‘q’ become functionally equivalent; “the implicature, usually defeasible, happens to be true in the bridging context, and so in that context is non-defeasible” (Enfield 2003: 29, italics original). The bridging context therefore “masks” the difference between pragmatic and semantic interpretation, enabling but not necessarily giving rise to, a new semanticized ‘q’; ‘p’ is left to persist or disappear (Ibid.).

This view is largely consistent with neoGricean approaches to the role of pragmatics in semantic change. In a much-cited brief comment Grice (1989: 39) said: “it may not be impossible for what starts life, so to speak, as a conversational implicature to become conventionalized” and much early work in the neoGricean tradition sought to establish how conversational implicatures may become attached to an expression and subsequently become part of its meaning (Brown and Levinson 1987: 261). An example is the development of since, derived from sīp ‘late’ (see also German seit ‘since’). It appears in Old English as sīþan, later with an adverbial –es as sīþenes. In the textual record there are few examples of its use as a conjunction that suggest the logical fallacy ‘post hoc ergo propter hoc’ was attached to it. However, it occasionally is used in translations of Latin quia ‘external cause’ and quoniam ‘internal cause’ (Molencki 2007). By Middle English it begins to appear in several native language examples where it cannot be temporal, only causal, indicating that a temporal-causal polysemy had arisen. By contrast, æfter ‘after’, though associated with causal implicatures in relevant contexts, has never become semantically polysemous (Traugott and König 1991). The implicatures can however, be effectively used in slogans and

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2 Parts of this section draw on Traugott (2004).

3 By “lexicalized” Evans and Wilkins mean what I term “semanticized”. I avoid the term “lexicalization” because of its multiple ambiguity.

4 External cause is what Sweetser (1990) calls cause in the socio-physical world (i), and internal cause is inferential cause (ii):

   i) She was late because the bus broke down.
   ii) She is/must be late because her lights aren’t on yet.
advertisements, for example ABC TV’s 1998 advertisement *Before TV, two World Wars*. *After TV*, zero.5

A fundamental assumption of the neoGricean approach is that there is a viable distinction to be made between pragmatics and semantics, roughly along the lines of context-dependent meaning (pragmatics) as opposed to context-independent meaning (semantics), and between implicature (what is meant) and what is said (propositional form). One of the challenges for historical linguistics is how to determine what is context-dependent or not, and what is meant beyond what is said. This is because, absent speakers with whom to check intuitions, almost all data other than dictionary entries occurs in linguistic context (“co-text”) and we can construe what is meant only from what is said (for more detailed discussion, see Hansen 2008: 34-40). The advent of large electronic corpora has helped significantly in overcoming this problem, though it is by no means solved. A further assumption is that there is both pragmatic polysemy (Horn 1984a, Sweetser 1990) and semantic polysemy. Granting that the concept of polysemy is problematic (see Tuggy 1993), without polysemy one cannot account for the fine-grained step-by-step developments that are attested by detailed study of texts and contexts over time.

The neoGricean approach draws heavily on Gricean Maxims and especially the division of labor that he proposed between Quantity1 and Quantity2 (1989: 26):

(1) Q1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
   Q2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Taking a largely truth-conditional approach to meaning, Horn (1984b) proposed two Principles grounded in the two types of Quantity and in the long-standing hypothesis that language change arises in part from two competing motivations (see e.g. Du Bois 1985): speakers seek to optimize the message for the hearer (“be clear”) while at the same time economizing the speech signal (“be quick”). Horn combined the two Quantity Maxims with the Maxim of Relation (“be relevant”) and the Maxim of Manner (“be perspicuous”, including such Maxims as “avoid ambiguity”; “be brief”) (Horn 1984b: 13):

(2)a. The Q Principle (Hearer-based):
   MAKE YOUR CONTRIBUTION SUFFICIENT (cf. Quantity1)
   SAY AS MUCH AS YOU CAN (given R)
   Lower-bounding principle, inducing upper-bounding implicata.

b. The R principle (Speaker-based):
   MAKE YOUR CONTRIBUTION NECESSARY (cf. Relation,
   Quantity2, Manner)
   SAY NO MORE THAN YOU MUST (given Q).
   Upper-bounding principle, inducing lower-bounding implicata.6

The Q Principle, being lower-bounding, is an ‘at least’ principle which implies ‘exactly’. The standard example is *John has two children*, which licenses the Q-inference ‘exactly two and

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5 Attributed to ABC’s executive Alan Cohen in an article entitled “Vince Manze's must see TV is NBC after TV” (exploiting a different use of *after*).

6 See also Horn, this volume and Ariel, this volume.
no more’. But speakers can use the same sentence and license the R-inference ‘at least two and possibly more’. Many R-based utterances, such as indirect speech acts like Can you pass me the salt? are understood as meaning more than is said due to relevance in the situation.

Horn has used these principles to account for semantic changes especially in the contentful lexical domain, most particularly narrowing and broadening, both of which have figured in taxonomies of semantic change at least since Bréal (1964). Horn argues that lexical narrowing may be R-based or Q-based. R-based narrowing usually involves “delimitation of a general term to a sense representing the salient exemplar of the category denoted by the term” (1984b: 35), i.e. set to subset denotation (p. 32). Examples include poison, which was borrowed from French with the meaning ‘toxic drink’, but derives ultimately from Latin potio(n) ‘drink’. Another is deer from Old English deor ‘animal’ (see the cognate Tier in German, which has not narrowed). Several such narrowings involve taboo avoidance, e.g. smell (originally the general term, but now often used to mean ‘stink’), undertaker (‘mortician’ < ‘one who undertakes’), disease (< ‘discomfort, uneasiness’). Q-based narrowing is sporadic and involves the “specialization of a general term triggered by the prior existence of a hyponym of that term” and the development of autohyponyms.8 Examples of autohyponyms are dog understood to include bitch and rectangle understood to include squares (but still allowing That’s not a dog, it’s a bitch, That’s not a rectangle, it’s a square, Horn 1984b). In general Q-inferences inhibit change.

Broadening is said always to involve R-based change: “the generalization of a species to cover the encompassing genus, from genus to phylum, from subset to superset” (Horn 1984b: 35), e.g. Latin pecunia ‘property/wealth in cattle’ (cf. pecu ‘livestock’) > ‘money’, expansion of place names (New Yorker) or trade names (xerox, thermos). Such broadening typically involves “semantic impoverishment” or loss of specificity.

While most of Horn’s examples are lexical and involve form-to-function changes in meaning, i.e. “semasiology”, one issue of particular interest to him involves the grammatical domain of quantifiers and what constraints on expressions there may be. The issue here is function-to-form relationships, also known as “onomasiology”. Horn (1989: Chapter 4) noted the absence in most languages of a single word for meanings in the corner of the Aristotelian Square of Oppositions that denotes the negation of the weaker member of a pair on a scale, e.g. the negation of some in the scale some-all. In English, although we have all, some, no, there is no nall (‘some X are not Y’), and likewise no nand. The generalization is that historically these single-word expressions are Q-blocked by the pre-existence of the positive weak operator on the scale (some X are Y implicates both some X are not Y and not all X are Y, and therefore nall would be uninformative). In a typological study of 29 languages of Europe and India, van der Auwer (2001) confirmed the absence of quantifiers and conjunctions like nall, nand cross-linguistically, but found (as did Horn 1989) that sometimes the negative of the weaker value of a modal scale is expressed as a single word, e.g. needn’t as in John needn’t eat his soup today expresses ‘not necessary that p’. Needn’t coexists with mustn’t (‘necessary that not p’) as in John mustn’t eat his soup today. Van der

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1 The symbols ‘<’ and ‘>’ are used to represent ‘derived from’ and ‘giving rise to’ respectively.

8 Autohyponyms (a term that appears to have been coined by Horn) are expressions that serve as hyponyms or superordinate terms for themselves. They are a highly complex set with different Q-based and R-based properties, depending on conventionalization (Horn 1984a).

Auwaer cites Russian nel’zja ‘not possible’, which has lost the positive l’zja. However, he also notes that in many languages the ‘not necessary/possible’ expression has come to be understood as ‘necessary/possible that not’ by R-implication. In French Il ne faut pas que tu meures was ambiguous between the two meanings ‘It is not necessary that you die’ and ‘It is necessary that you not die’ but came to mean only the latter (Tobler 1921), despite the syntactic mismatch.

Much of the discussion of R- and Q-implicatures rests on privileging expression of several meanings as a single word. This issue underpins Levinson’s reinterpretation of Grice’s Maxims, which involve not two Principles but three Heuristics (Levinson 2000: 35-9):

(3) i. The Q Heuristic: What isn’t said, isn’t.
   ii. The I Heuristic: What is expressed simply is stereotypically exemplified.
   iii. The M Heuristic: What’s said in an abnormal way, isn’t normal.

Whereas Horn highlights Relation (hence “R-Principle”), Levinson highlights Informativeness (hence “I-Heuristic”).

Levinson proposes that (synchronically) Q has priority over M and M over I because I-inferences are “based primarily on stereotypical presumptions about the world” (Levinson 2000: 40). Priority of Q can in part account for conservativeness, and M for change. New expressions are always “abnormal”, and grammaticalization often involves the choice of periphrastic expressions when shorter ones already exist, e.g. of cantare habeo ‘sing-INF have:1Sg’, which eventually became the RV future ending in French, when an inflectional future cantabo already existed. This is what Lehmann (1995) has referred to as ‘expressiveness’ and Haspelmath (1999) as “extravagance”. However, to the extent that the M-heuristic is conceptualized as involving pairs, one more “marked” or longer than the other, it is problematic. New expressions rarely arise or exist in pairs. Rather, lexical and grammatical domains may have several members competing in the same semantic space (Traugott 2004).

Levinson (1995) distinguishes three levels of meaning: a) coded meaning (semantics), b) utterance token meanings that arise in context “on the fly” and may be “one-offs”, and c) utterance-type meanings, which are implied meanings that may be preferred, but may be also cancelled. Utterance-token meanings are similar to Grice’s conversational implicatures, utterance-type meanings to Grice’s generalized implicatures. Traugott and Dasher (2002) drew on this three-way distinction in developing the Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change (IITSC). The speaker/writer invites the addressee/reader to make inferences, in other words the interlocutors are conceptualized as active partners in the communicative dyad. The speaker/writer may invite one-off interpretations (IINs) or may use ones that have become generalized in the community (GIINs). Focus is almost exclusively on Horn’s R-Principle to the extent that it accounts for enriching of abstract meaning and for generalization, in part because Traugott and her colleagues were initially concerned primarily with the semanticization of pragmatics in the process of grammaticalization.

While IITSC draws on Grice and Levinson, no exact match with their distinctions should be expected, since it is less concerned with logic and more with interacting partners (although the degree to which interaction is central to the theory has increased substantially over the years), and the Maxims are reconceptualized in the way Horn proposed in (2). Hansen and

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10 The term invited inferencing is borrowed from Geis and Zwicky (1971), but is not restricted to generalized implicatures, as theirs is.
Walateral (2006) point to an ambiguity in the meaning “generalized” in so far as it is associated with “conventionalized”, as in the case of GIINs and GCIs: “conventionalized” can be understood as a) “arbitrary” or b) “common, unmarked” (akin to Morgan’s 1978 “conventions of usage”). GIINs are to be understood in the second sense. They may be “salient” in the community in that they can be drawn on consciously, cf. the causal implicature of after, but for the most part they are used unconsciously (Keller 1994). GIINs may continue to be available and usable over centuries, even millennia, but sometimes they may also be absorbed into the meaning of an expression with which they were formerly only pragmatically associated. In this case semanticization/new coding has occurred.

By “salient” is meant available and recurrent, i.e. frequently used. Salience is likely to be enabled in part by cognitive patterns such as have been identified in the literature on recurrent metaphors and metonymies (see e.g. Cuyckens, Dirven, and Taylor 2003, Bybee 2007, Koch 2004), on cultural scripts (see Evans and Wilkins 2000), and on grammaticalization (see Heine, Claudi, and Hünnemeyer 1991, Heine and Kuteva 2002). “Salience” in this sense is not to be identified with “structural weight” as proposed by Geeraerts (1987: 20). Nor is it necessarily to be identified with foregrounding of implicatures as proposed by Heine (2002), since they are largely backgrounded at least initially (Hansen 2008: 29). Salience is essential to the proposal that, if inferences are involved in a particular change, there is a stage when they are generalized. Hansen and Walateral (2006) and Hansen (2008: 66) question whether GIINs are necessary for the development of coded meaning. To the extent that there is no textual evidence for a “stage” of ambiguity (see section 4), this is true, but in many cases textual replication of invited inferences provides evidence that GIINs do play a role in many changes involving semanticization of pragmatic implicatures.

A concept related to invited inferencing is “context-induced reinterpretation” (see e.g. Heine, Claudi, and Hünnemeyer 1991). As the term suggests, on this view more attention is paid to outcomes of change (reinterpretation) than to onsets of semantic change, and to the hearer than to the speaker. While the hearer is undoubtedly more likely to reanalyze the pragmatics associated with a construction than is the speaker, it is only when this hearer acts as a speaker that the reinterpretation can be discovered. As Kuteva (2001) points out, context itself is only an enabling factor. The locus of change is to be found in perception of mismatch between speaker intention and hearer interpretation, on the assumption that speakers and addressees are not mirror images of each other, but have different cognitive statuses.

Several domains have been investigated with particular attention to the semanticization of pragmatics. Among them are developments that originate in temporal expressions. Hansen (2008) discusses the polyfunctional development of four French adverbs: déjà, encore, toujours, and enfin, roughly ‘already, yet, still’, and ‘finally’. Another set of changes that has received much attention involves temporals, e.g. since ‘temporal’ > ‘causal’, while ‘during the time that’ (or rather pa hwile be ‘during that time that’) > ‘concessive’ in English, but causal in German. Chen (2002) drew attention to the fact that concessives involve contrast, or adversative relationships. Subsequent work on English concessives has found that contrast is a stage prior to the development of concessives in the case of while (Gonzáles-Cruz 2007), and whereas (Breul 2007). There is an inference from co-existence in time (while) and space (whereas) to juxtaposition and contrast, and from contrast to concessive and sometimes other marginal meanings (e.g. while has some causal and even additive readings, Breul 2007). These changes have all been shown to arise only in very specific contexts; for one they are clausal, not prepositional, and typically the temporality involved is one of coextension, not sequence.
In a case of temporal > conditional, Old English *swa lange swa* > *so/as long as*, the temporal clause describes a situation that is or can be construed as temporary, as in (4).

(4) wring þurh linenne clāð on þæt eage *swa lange swa* him
wring through linen cloth on that eye as long as him
dearf sy
need be
’squeeze (the medication) through a linen cloth into the eye as long as he needs’ (850-950 Lacnunga, p. 100 [Traugott and Dasher 2002: 36])

By hypothesis this medical instruction was meant to be understood as meaning ‘for the length of time that he needs’; in addition there is, at least from hindsight, pragmatic strengthening to the concessive ‘provided that he needs it’. This concessive meaning can be inferred in some examples for nearly a thousand years of textual history, but appears to become a more salient and plausibly intended meaning, i.e. a GIIN, during the seventeenth century, as in:

(5) They whose words doe most shew forth their wise vnderstanding, and whose lips doe vttter the purest knowledge, *so long as* they vnderstand and speake as men, are they not faine sundry waies to excuse themselves?

‘Those whose words most reveal their wise understanding and whose lips utter the purest knowledge, for the length of time/provided that they understand and speak like men, are they not content to excuse themselves in various ways?’ (1614 Hooker, p. 5 [Traugott and Dasher 2002: 37])

It is not until the eighteenth century, however, that we find examples in which the conditional appears to have been semanticized, i.e. is the only plausible reading:

(6) I heard Ann Wright say … Chapman had stole Davis's watch; she asked Davis to go and see for it; Davis answered, he did not mind the watch, *so long as* he escaped with his life (1764 Trial of William Chapman, POB t17641017-18)

Another domain in which invited inferencing has been hypothesized to play a significant role is the development of auxiliaries. The precursors of contemporary future markers, *will, shall, be going to* were *will*- ‘intend’ (volitional), *scul-* ‘owe’, and *be going to* ‘motion with a purpose’. In relevant contexts all implied later states of affairs that were not realized at time of utterance. The precursors of *may, can, and must* were *mag-* ‘have the (physical) ability’, *cunn-* have the mental ability’, and *mot-* ‘be able to’ (*must* is a past tense form). From ability there is a societal, if not logical, invited inference to permission or obligation, especially if the subject is a second person, and the speaker is in a position of authority. In (7) God says to Adam:

(7) Ealra þæra þinga þe on neorxna wange syndon þu
(o)f(all those things that in Paradise are you
*most* brucan … buton anum treowe
are able to/may enjoy… except one tree
(c. 1000 ÆCHom I. 12.34 [Warner 1990: 544])

In all the examples of invited inferencing cited here the claim is that the chief cognitive mechanism underlying the changes is metonymy, broadly construed (Traugott and Dasher
2002), i.e. understood as “simultaneous or sequential co-presence of elements within the same conceptual framework (cf. Panther and Thornburg 2003: 712)” (Hansen 2008: 71). Semanticization of pragmatics involves a profile shift from pragmatic status to coding status (Koch 2004 identifies it as a foreground-background reversal). This metonymic profile shift may be enabled by metaphors that preexist and serve as frames for the shift, and may result in what appear synchronically to be metaphors (see especially Blank 1997: Chapter 4).

To the extent that the examples involve grammaticalization (development of expressions conveying grammatical meanings) they also involve the development of procedural meanings: “instructions to hearers on how the conceptual meanings expressed in an utterance should be combined and processed” (Hansen 2008: 20). In the cases discussed so far, there is typically a) a contentful meaning initially that is associated with abstract procedural implicatures, b) an intermediary stage in which an expression has both contentful and procedural meanings, e.g. be going to understood as both intentional and future, and c) eventually primarily or exclusively procedural meanings, e.g. be going to in raising constructions, e.g. It’s going to rain (Nicolle 1997). The development of procedural meanings is associable with “bleaching”, the loss of lexical meaning, but enrichment of grammatical, meaning. As Eckardt (2006: 248) points out, grammatical expressions are relational, “hardly of a kind that would allow ostensive introduction”. They are functional elements, the compositional “glue” of clauses (Fintel 1995: 182).

3. (Inter)subjectification

Among pragmatic factors that come to be semanticized are subjectivity and intersubjectivity as projected by the speaker. Subjectivity and intersubjectivity are ambient in language use because of the dyadic speaker-addressee interaction (Benveniste 1971). The mechanism by which semanticization occurs is a subtype of semantic reanalysis known as (inter)subjectification. There are two leading approaches to this type of change, one associated with Langacker, one with Traugott. Although the two approaches had much in common in the early stages (see Langacker 1990, Traugott 1989), they have come to be increasingly differentiated (see Langacker 2006, De Smet and Verstraete 2006, López-Cousin Forthcoming and Traugott 2010; extensive examples of the Langacker perspective can be found in Athanasiadou, Canakis, and Cornillie 2006, and of Traugott’s in Davidse, Vandelanotte, and Cuyckens 2010).

In Langacker’s (2006) view subjectivity concerns construal of vantage-point and how explicitly speaker is referenced in the utterance. Subjectification is a kind of bleaching by

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11 One of the first semanticists to focus on the role of metonymy in semantic change was Stern (1961); he called it “permutation”.
12 Panther and Thornburg (2003) is (2003a) in the references.
13 Discussion of both metaphor and metonymy in terms of semanticization of pragmatics necessarily focuses on their pragmatic rather than mapping properties (see Panther and Thornburg 2003b for the distinction).
14 Many definitions of grammaticalization assume lexical sources only, but recently there has been much interest in the development of grammatical expressions from non-lexical material (see Lehmann 2008, Traugott 2008); see section 4 for some examples.
15 The term “procedural” is due to Blakemore (1987).
16 “Conceptual” in Relevance Theoretic terms.
which the objectively construed on-stage meaning comes to be construed as off-stage, cf. the change from *be going to* ‘agent moves with a purpose’ > *be going to* ‘future’, most clearly with inanimate subjects. Langacker has proposed that “off-stage” subjectivity “was actually there, *immanent*” all along (Langacker 2006: 21, bold original). Intersubjectivity is “appraisal of other minds” and “simulation of the other’s experience” in a symmetric speaker-addressee dyad (Langacker 2007); his examples are the use of first and second person pronouns as opposed to third person pronouns. It is not clear how intersubjectification would be conceptualized in this framework.

Whereas Langacker’s approach focuses on conceptualization, Traugott’s is concerned with changes to linguistic expression (semasiology). Whereas Langacker conceives the speaker-addressee dyad as basically symmetric, with both participants sharing similar experiences, Traugott conceives it as asymmetric in any instance of interaction since speakers’ and hearers’ (or writers’ and readers’) intentions may be different, and cognitive statuses usually are (Hansen 2008: 28). On this view subjectification is the new encoding of meanings that express speaker point of view, and includes not only *be going to* and raising constructions, but also such semantic changes as *anyway* ‘in any direction’ > ‘nevertheless’ (in clause-final position), ‘in any case’ (in clause-initial position) and *promise* ‘sent forward’ > ‘performative speech act verb’. Intersubjectification, by contrast, is new encoding of meanings that express such types of speaker attention to addressee as consideration of “face” (giving rise to hedged meanings such as are found in pragmatic markers, e.g. *well*, to request forms such as *please* < *if you please* (‘if it gives you pleasure’), and to Japanese addressee honorific style-marking, Traugott and Dasher 2002) and elicitation of a response (e.g. question tags like *right*?). The invited inferences involved in (inter)subjectification enrich meaning beyond what is meant, i.e. are consistent with Horn’s R-Principle, but they are not primarily logical. They are based in interaction and negotiation of meaning between speakers and hearers.

The examples discussed above involving shifts from temporal to casual, concessive, or conditional, or from deontic to epistemic modality all involve subjectification. Generally the textual evidence suggests increase in subjectivity over time within and across semantic domains. For example, epistemic modals may be more subjective in general than deontic modals, but both deontic and epistemic modals show increases in subjectivity over time (Goossens 1999). In English epistemic *must* originated in generic statements such as:

(8) **Ealle we moton sweltan**
    All we must die
‘We all must die (?8thC Exodus [Warner 1993: 162])

or in passages of logical reasoning, and only over time come to be used to express clearly personal evaluations as in:

(9) **LADY TOUCHWOOD: Don’t ask me my reasons, my lord, for they are not fit to be told you.**

    **LORD TOUCHWOOD: (Aside) I’m amazed; here must be something more than ordinary in this,**

    **(1693 Congreve, Double Dealer III, p. 154 [Traugott and Dasher 2002: 129-130])**

A modal domain in which subjectification has recently been identified is that of modal adjectives like *essential* and *vital* (Van linden 2009). These originated as non-modal adjectives meaning ‘being such by its true nature’, and ‘associated with life’; they both came to be used with dynamic modal meaning (necessity in the situation) and eventually deontic moral meaning. In the non-modal meaning the adjective is a classifier of the noun as in:
Van Linden proposes that the key to the development of dynamic modal meanings was use with evaluative modification of the noun to which a particular feature is said to be essential:

(11) It is an essential property of man truly wise, not to open all the boxes of his bosome (1618 Raleigh, Remains [OED; van Linden 2009: 82])

The speaker’s subjective evaluation of the nominal became associated with the adjective and gave rise to meanings of potentiality, indeed necessity in the situation.

Another domain in which subjectification is a clear factor is the attribution of scalar meanings to an expression, as in the development of modals (cf. degrees of modal strength from deontic and epistemic ought to > have (got) to > must), of adverbial intensifiers (e.g. a bit/lot < ‘a unit of’), and approximators (sort of < ‘a type of’) (see e.g. Denison 2002, Brems 2007, Traugott 2008). A further domain is the development of evaluative adjectives into intensifiers. In this meaning they occur to the left of descriptive adjectives and function as postdeterminers in English, e.g. pretty as in That vase is pretty ugly, pure as in That’s pure nonsense, right in the right excellent high and mighty prince (see e.g. Adamson 2000, Nevalainen and Rissanen 2002, Vandewinkel and Davidse 2008, Méndez-Naya 2008). One of these, very ‘true’ (< French verrai ‘true’) as in the very God ‘the true God’, came in contexts modifying an indefinite nominal to be used with a scalar implicature (a very patroness). Once interpreted as scalar it came to be used before other adjectives (very precious stones), and finally became an adverb; real, that is one of its replacements, is undergoing a similar change (That’s real ugly). Another set of adjectives that have been assigned postdeterminer or even quantifier structure includes adjectives denoting difference (Breban 2008). Several is now a quantifier, but originally it meant ‘distinct’, as in:

(12) a. All men should marke theyr cattell with an open severall marke upon theyr flanckes (1596 Spenser, State Ireland [OED several adj I.c, Breban 2008: 299])

   b. (on learning to distinguish letters of the alphabet) Thus when a childe hath got the names of his letters, & their several shapes withal in a playing manner, he may easily be taught to distinguish them in the following leaf (HC 1500-1700 [Breban 2008: 299])

In contexts like (12b) there is an invited inference of plurality, presumably one of the intermediate steps between the original and the present-day meaning. The adjectives discussed here all originate in attributive uses; in their postdeterminer or quantificational uses they all appear to the left of attributive adjectives. They may be regarded as instances of grammaticalization since they acquire adverbial properties (see Breban Forthcoming).

Subjectification is independent of grammaticalization, as the example of essential shows. Other lexical examples include the preemption for performative use of speech act verbs like promise (derived from the past participle of a spatial expression, Old French pro ‘forward’ mettre- ‘send’) (see Traugott and Dasher, Chapter 5). However, subjectification is often linked with grammaticalization because the “glue” that grammatical markers provide indicates relations selected by the speaker, whether modal assessments of the factuality of the proposition, establishment of temporal relations to the time of speaking (tense), or connectivity.

Traugott (1989 and in later work) attempted to unify various types of subjectification as an overarching, dominant type of semantic change, including the development of evaluative words like boor ‘crude person’ < ‘farmer’ (see German Bauer ‘farmer’). Pejorations of this
type, and also ameliorations such as *knight* < *cniht* ‘boy’, very often become “objectified” in the sense that they come to be part of the community norm and are different in kind from the type of subjectification discussed above, which involves development of metatextual meanings. There has been some concern that “subjectification” has as a result become a “catch-all” term. Hence there has been interest in breaking the concept down again. For example, both Waltereit and Detges (2007) and De Smet and Verstraete (2006) point to the importance of thinking about subjectification in terms of the different functions of the subjectified elements.

Waltereit and Detges contrast the development of French *bien* and Spanish *bien*, both meaning ‘well’ (adverbial form of ‘good’), but functioning in different ways. In French the adverb of manner develops into a modal that counters a denial. The modal use is scalar and derives (as is typical of new epistemic modals) from a dispute about the validity of ‘p’. Adopting an interactional and argumentation-based approach to the semanticization of pragmatics which highlights the role of multiple perspectives or “dialogicity” (see Ducrot 1984, Schwenter 2000), they suggest that French *bien* “emerges from a stereotyped argumentation which originally is dialogical in nature” (Waltereit and Detges 2007: 77-78), for example (p. 75):

(13)  L1: *p* is not the case.
     L2: *p* is WELL the case.

Such a development is consistent with Horn’s R-Principle, though framed in a more interactional way, and involves negotiation of common ground. Waltereit and Detges contrast Spanish *bien*, which is used not modally, but to initiate a change of topic, and suggest that rather than being a direct extension of the adverb *bien* ‘well’, it is the result of a rather different strategy: interactional argumentation linking arguments in a discourse. They postulate multiple paths leading to the development of the discourse marker use of *bien* in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries, including use as response at a turn, and concessive argumentation, and conclude that while both the French and the Spanish *bien* involve subjectification, their different meanings arise in diachrony because speakers have different rhetorical moves in mind.

Somewhat similarly, but with more attention to syntax and outcomes of subjectification, De Smet and Verstraete (2006) show how in Dutch *leuk* ‘luke-warm’ came to be used to mean ‘calm’ (of persons) and was eventually ameliorated to ‘pleasant, funny’. By contrast *dom* ‘dumb’ came to be used in the meaning ‘unintelligent’ and in Belgian Dutch has been pejorated to ‘annoying, cursed, bloody’. While both undergo the semantic shift physical > intellectual > evaluative, *leuk* remains a contentful gradable adjective that can be used to define an entity, *dom* has become non-gradable and can be used only with a grounding expression. It has undergone intersubjectification.

De Smet and Verstraete (2006) regard what are often called procedural or discourse marker uses of connectives as interpersonal uses. *Because* and *after* clauses that can serve as the focus of a cleft are distinguished from *as, since, and for* clauses which cannot (p. 380). *As, since, and for* clauses are considered to involve not only speaker positioning (subjectification) but also “interaction with the interlocutor, because the clause introduced by the conjunction represents a separate speech act in discourse” (p. 387). The authors consider subjectification and intersubjectification to be semanticizations; hence this interactive use is presumably a case of coding in their view.
However, many of the examples in which the rise of subjective, and especially intersubjective meanings, is discussed have recently been labeled (conventionalized) “pragmaticalizations”, most especially the development of pragmatic enrichments often associated with new uses of more contentful material as “pragmatic markers”, “discourse markers”, or “comment clauses” in new positions in a clause or intonation unit. The left periphery of the clause or intonation unit in English is often associated with subjective material (e.g. topic marking and epistemic modals), and the right periphery with intersubjective marking (e.g. question tags). Originally meaning ‘securely’, surely became an epistemic modal adverb used in medial and clause-initial position. Like many other epistemic adverbs (e.g. indeed, actually), in clause initial position it came to be used in extended ways. Whereas in fact and actually came to be used primarily as reformulation markers, surely came to be used intersubjectively as a “fighting word” eliciting a response (Downing 2001). It is, however, more intersubjective in right periphery, where, like no doubt (Simon-Vandenbergen 2007) and of course (Lewis 2003), it can be used to put the addressee down.

In other languages the right periphery may be used for a wider set of functions (see papers on Japanese in Suzuki 2006, Onodera and Suzuki 2007). Yap, Matthews, and Horie (2004) discuss the development in right periphery of the clause of no in Japanese, de in Mandarin, punya in Malay, all from genitive cases markers to stance markers meaning ‘for sure’. This is primarily subjective rather than intersubjective, as is Old Chinese ye yi yi ‘new realization/resignation on the part of speaker’, ultimately derived from yi ‘finish/perfective aspect’ (Yap, Lam, and Wang 2008). In some cases, whether the intersubjective meaning is considered to be a GIIN or have become coded may be a function of the linguist’s analysis and the extent to which association with syntactic slots is regarded as determining use. But in others, there appears to be incontrovertible semanticization of intersubjective meanings because the form has changed as well. Look (< look you/thou, with second person pronoun according to Brinton 2008) and Italian guarda ‘look’ (Waltereit 2006) originate in imperatives, and therefore were originally intersubjective. They have, however, acquired additional intersubjective functions in parenthetical uses when there is nothing to look at. From the eighteenth century on look has been used not only to claim attention but also to express aggression, especially in the phrase look here.

The neo-Gricean tradition has little to contribute directly to the study of subjectification and especially intersubjectification since the tradition is primarily “cognitive-inferential” and privileges informativeness (Jucker Forthcoming). As Jucker points out, European researchers have tended to work within a broader “socio-interactional conceptualization”. The distinction is readily apparent if one compares Grice’s Maxims with those of Keller (1994). Although building in part on Grice’s Maxims, Keller’s are Maxims of action, including not only “Talk in such a way that the other understands you” (p. 98), but also interactional ones such as “Talk in such a way that you are not recognizable as a member of the [other] group” (p. 101), a Maxim that is about identity and group dynamics rather than truth or belief. Such an integrated informational and interactional perspective promises to give us a better understanding of (inter)subjectification, and indeed of most issues in pragmatics and language change.

17 Downing discusses this use in terms of subjectivity, however.

18 See also Kecskes, this volume.
4. Some special roles attributed to context

Work on ways in which pragmatics comes to be encoded semantically has for the last several decades assumed that change is situated and contextual. The terms “context-induced reinterpretation” used by Heine and his colleagues explicitly calls attention to context (understood as co-text). So does the notion of “context-absorption” (Kuteva 2001: 150), which is essentially the equivalent of the semanticization of pragmatic inferences. There have, however, been debates about how to think about these contexts/co-texts, most especially whether ambiguous contexts are a necessary condition for change.

Heine (2002) and Diewald (2002) both posit a necessary stage between the initial state and grammaticalization. This intermediate stage is a “bridging” stage according to Heine, who focuses on the development of ambiguous contexts in which new interpretations are pragmatically licensed (e.g. the several centuries during which temporal as/so long as could be understood in certain contexts to have conditional meaning, but had not yet become semanticized or absorbed). This view is consistent with Stage 2 of Enfield’s model in Figure I. Diewald sees this intermediate stage, which she calls this a “critical context”, as one of not only meaning ambiguity but also morphosyntactic specialization and ambiguity.

Historical data do in many cases attest to an ambiguous intermediate stage. Be going to is probably best known for appearing in contexts where it could be understood as literal motion with a purpose or implied future for about a hundred and fifty years (see Eckardt 2006: Chapter 4); as/so long as appears ambiguously far longer. However, in some cases “context-absorption” occurs without ambiguity, at least as far as this can be discovered across different manuscripts and times. A case in point is the development described in Kytö and Romaine (2005) of English be/have like to + V ‘imminently likely to V’ into an “avertive” or modal auxiliary marking “action narrowly averted” as in I had like to have fallen. In English it was used primarily from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, after which it came to be regarded as non-standard. The structural morphosyntactic and semantic contexts for the onset of the avertive construction in later Middle English are past tense (of the verb itself), collocation with infinitive verbs with semantically negative orientation (e.g. fall), and with conditional if- or but-clauses. There is no ambiguity here. Kytö and Romaine regard the development as a case of pragmatic implicatures from context becoming attached to the verb construction, and cueing the addressee about the narrowness of the aversion (i.e. coming to be used in a partly procedural way). This attachment enabled (but clearly did not cause) the use of the construction without explicit counterfactuals in the eighteenth century.

Another example of invited inferencing that became absorbed and semanticized is the development of ALL-pseudo-clefts like All I want to eat is the peach (Traugott 2008). Here all means ‘the only thing’, and the cleft construction picks the peach out as an exhaustive listing. The precursors of constructions of this type were purposive as in All I did was to honor you, where all means ‘everything’ and the time of action (doing) preceded that of the intended honoring. The pseudo-cleft constructions originated in contexts of surprise, denial, and discursive contesting/dialogicity generally, as in this excerpt from a letter by the Earl of Leicester who had fallen from grace at Queen Elizabeth’s court:

(14) For it is more then death unto me, that her majestie should be thus ready to interpret awaysie hardly of my service, specially before it might pleas her to understannde my reasons for that I do … All her majestie can laye to my charge ys going a little furder then she gave me commision for (1585-6 Leicester [CEEC])

19 This is an auxiliary type identified for Bulgarian in Kuteva (2001).
This, the first example of an ALL-pseudo-cleft known to me, is not ambiguous, but derives its meaning from the complaint, the negative orientation of lay to my charge ‘charge me with’, and the situationally dynamic modal can. We must conclude that although encoding of pragmatics cannot occur out of context, the context is not necessarily ambiguous.

One of the striking things about contexts that is receiving increased attention as electronic corpora allow for more and more fine-grained analysis is “persistence”. Hopper (1991) identified it as a principle of grammaticalization that accounts for the fact that differences between members of a category such as future markers “can be understood as continuations of their original lexical meaning” (Bybee and Pagliuca 1985: 117). An example is the retention of ‘oneness’ in the various uses of only (derived from the numeral one). These range from exclusive adverb (only once) to focusing adverb (only Kim left) to “exceptional” pragmatic marker (I would have asked you; only my mother told me not to) (Brinton 2008: 53). Visconti (2006) attributes the difference between Italian perfino and addirittura, which both mean roughly ‘even’, to their source meanings. Perfino can be an additive marker as well as a scalar focus marker (cf. also in English even Jane left, and I saw Sarah and even Jane), but addirittura cannot. Visconti suggests that the source construction per fino ‘through to the end’ favors an addition reading, but a dirittura ‘in a straight line’ does not.

Since semantic persistence appears to be highly language-specific, it has in some cases been reinterpreted not as an issue of retained elements of meaning, but rather of retained contexts. Since different languages have different structures, cross-linguistic replication of particular contextual types of persistence is less likely to be expected than persistence of meanings. We may note that language-specific pragmatic bridging contexts persist as do the types of morphosyntactic contexts that enable grammaticalization, though of course they are no longer “critical”, only harmonic with later uses. For example, Kytö and Romaine (2005) note that contextual cues such as contrastive but and reference to events that one could be expected to wish to avoid persisted in the case of avertive auxiliaries. Bonelli (1992) notes that ALL-clefs tend to occur in negative contexts in her later twentieth century data. Torres Cacoullos and Walker (2009) show that a multivariate analysis of will and be going to in their Quebec English data reveals almost identical distributions with motion verbs, and little difference in declaratives and main clauses. However, there are significant differences in small “niches”, which Torres Cacoullos and Walker correlate with “vestiges of earlier source constructions” (p. 327), e.g. be going to is favored in interrogatives, will with indefinite adverbials like someday, later, and in main clauses of conditionals.

5. Conclusion

Not all semantic change arises out of pragmatic implicatures. Some changes are mandated (e.g. definition of harassment), some are self-selected and “re-claimed” (e.g. gay, Yankee). Others occur because the referent changes (car, plane), there are sociocultural changes (e.g. changes in habits for meal times, in distinguishing kin, and above all politeness) or because a term is borrowed (this will have socially pragmatic effects) (Blank 1999).

Nevertheless, whether primarily logical or interactional, pragmatic implicatures are always synchronically context-sensitive, a great many semantic changes do result from the absorption of pragmatic implicatures into the meaning of an expression. Some implicatures can be readily accounted for in terms of a modified neo-Gricean construal of Maxims; they are for the most part related to metatextual, modal and grammatical meanings, although these can also help understand some lexical narrowing and broadenings. Other implicatures tend to be more socially grounded, and can be better accounted for in terms of Keller’s Maxims of
action. These may lead to pejorations and ameliorations as well as to intersubjective interactional meanings. Like other aspects of language change, semantic change is multiply motivated, and forever potentially emergent.

Data Sources


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