

# REVISITING SUBJECTIFICATION AND INTERSUBJECTIFICATION

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## 1. Introduction<sup>i</sup>

The topic of subjectivity has been discussed in semantics at least since Bréal (1964 [1900]). Benveniste's (1971 [1958]) landmark paper distinguished subjectivity and intersubjectivity. These are synchronic notions, and can be theorized in many ways, from cognitive construal (Langacker, e.g. 1990, 2003 and references therein) to the basis of human interaction and the procedures for producing and understanding talk (Schiffrin 1990). One branch of my own work in the last twenty-five years, starting with Traugott (1982), has been to study the semanticization over time of subjectivity, understood as relationship to the speaker and the speaker's beliefs and attitudes,<sup>iii</sup> and of intersubjectivity, understood as relationship to the addressee and addressee's face. I have called the diachronic process of semanticization "(inter)subjectification", assuming that an important (though not rigid) distinction is to be made between *-ity* (synchronic state) and *-ation* (diachronic process) (see also De Smet and Verstraete 2006). I have also attempted to understand what the relationship between subjectification and intersubjectification is. In this research endeavor I have drawn extensively on neoGricean pragmatics (see e.g. Horn 1984, Levinson 2000) and on discourse analysis (see e.g. Schiffrin 1987, Prince 1988). Another branch of my work has been grammaticalization (e.g. Traugott and Heine (eds.) 1991, Hopper and Traugott 2003 [1993]). In the 1982 paper, and in others since then, I have sought to see where and why (inter)subjectification and grammaticalization intersect. The work has been based in historical texts and the evidence we can draw from them, assuming that language change is change in use (see Croft 2000), and that there is a distinction between semantics and pragmatics.<sup>iv</sup> My purpose in the present paper is to outline my current thinking on the relationship between (inter)subjectivity, (inter)subjectification, and grammaticalization (see also Traugott Forthcoming a on the first two topics).

I start with discussion of (inter)subjectivity and (inter)subjectification (section 2), and then of grammaticality and grammaticalization (section 3). After three brief case studies (*a piece of, a bit of, a shred of*) (Section 4),<sup>vi</sup> I provide some thoughts about the mechanisms and motivations for grammaticalization and (inter)subjectification (Section 5). The paper ends with some consideration of suggestions about how one might go about operationalizing subjectification in historical corpus studies (Section 6), and Section 7 sums up.

## 2. (Inter)subjectivity, (inter)subjectification

In Traugott (1982) I drew in part on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) distinction between "ideational", "textual" and "interpersonal" components of the linguistic system, but used the terms "propositional", "textual", and "expressive". Theirs was a synchronic analysis, but the insight I had was that historically in many cases a lexical item that originated in the ideational component later developed polysemies in what Halliday and Hasan called

the textual and interpersonal domains. Subsequent work has shown that both of these terms encompass two different types of structure.

“Textual”, as understood then, included various connectives such as *and* and *therefore*, as well as anaphoric and cataphoric pronouns, topicalizers, relativizers, complementizers, etc. In the nineteen-eighties it became clear that while all are essential ingredients of grammar, some of these serve more contentful (and sometimes truth-conditional) purposes of local connectivity (e.g. relativizers, complementizers), whereas others serve the procedural purposes of expressing speaker’s attitude to the text under production (topicalizers, discourse markers). Indeed, many connectives have dual functions, e.g. *and*, *then*, *in fact*.

Halliday and Hasan’s term “interpersonal” likewise covered a broad spectrum of phenomena, such as expressions of speech function, exchange structures, and attitude. In a more recent discussion, Halliday has proposed that, most simply put, “interpersonal” concerns “clause as exchange” (Halliday 1994: 179), and includes both subjective and intersubjective elements, e.g. modal, and mood-marking elements, vocative, interactive acts of speaking including illocutionary acts, deictic person pronouns, attitudinal lexical items like *splendid*, and prosodic voice features. In Traugott (1982) I preferred the term “expressive” to “interpersonal” since it was unclear to me where the “inter-” fit in chronologically. Later, following Benveniste (1971 [1958]) I came to distinguish “subjective” and “intersubjective” (Traugott and Dasher 2002, Traugott 2003a), and I will make this distinction here. Historically, and, I would argue, synchronically, there is a difference with respect to what has to be learned, and therefore specified in the inventory,<sup>vii</sup> between subjective *possibly*, *even* (markers of speaker assessment) and intersubjective *please* (a marker of speaker’s acknowledgment of and attention to the addressee).

Of course, in a general sense the very fact of communicating with another person entails general intersubjectivity. The “I” is constituted in part by conceptualizing the other member of the communicative dyad “you” (Benveniste 1971 [1958], Lyons 1994) and discourse is communicatively successful only if speakers pay attention to audience needs, and if “mutual manifestness” or “mutual management” is worked on (Schiffrin 1990, Nuyts 2001, Verhagen 2005). Indeed, it is precisely to emphasize the intersubjectivity of the speech situation that I have referred to “invited inferences” rather than “implicatures” in theorizing semantic change as the semanticization of pragmatics. The term “invited inferences” was chosen “to elide the complexities of communication in which the speaker/writer evokes implicatures and invites the addressee/reader to infer them”<sup>viii</sup> (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 5). Intersubjectification is the ambient context in which linguistic change takes place and to which linguistic change contributes. My main concern is not with this context, but with linguistic MARKERS and EXPRESSIONS that index subjectivity and intersubjectivity and how they arise.

These expressions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity are expressions the prime semantic or pragmatic meaning of which is to index speaker attitude or viewpoint (subjectivity) and speaker’s attention to addressee self-image (intersubjectivity). At issue is the development of semantic (coded) polysemies that have to be learned with subjective or intersubjective meanings, and how these come into being. These polysemies may later be reinterpreted as homonymies (e.g. *fairly* ‘in a fair manner’ and ‘somewhat’), or one or more of the polysemies may cease to be used (e.g. *villain* ‘peasant’ and ‘evil person’), but by hypothesis most new semantic developments emerge as polysemies, pragmatic to begin with, then semantic. Subjectified polysemies may index evaluation of

others (*silly* ‘blessed, innocent’ > ‘stupid’), of relative position on a scale (adverbs like *pretty* ‘cleverly’ > ‘attractively’ > ‘rather’), of attitude toward the truth of a proposition (epistemics like *probably* ‘provably’ > ‘in all likelihood’); they may index information structure (e.g. the topicalizer *as far as*), connectivity of clauses to each other (*anyway*), the speech act being undertaken (*promise* in its illocutionary uses), or the relationship of chunks/episodes of speech to each other (*then* in its discourse marker use).

Intersubjectified polysemies may index euphemisms (*the Lord* ‘god’, *pass* ‘die’, etc., see Allen and Burridge 1991), politeness (*please* < formulae like *If you please*, where the surrounding context has been absorbed into the meaning of *please*). While I have not been concerned with culturally driven shifts in stylistic preferences, genre preferences (Fitzmaurice 2000), honorification preferences (cf. Japanese vs. Dutch or English), rhetorical play whereby speakers attempt to position interlocutors (Fitzmaurice 2004), or shifts in “habits of mind” (Wierzbicka 2006), these are all important areas of research that, among other things, require detailed knowledge of attested linguistic changes, and how to analyze them. I take my work as potentially providing the linguistic underpinnings for such larger-scale studies of the relationship between language, culture and cognition.

My starting point for thinking about subjectivity is and has been Lyons’ characterization of subjectivity:

The term subjectivity refers to the way in which natural languages, in their structure and their normal manner of operation, provide for the locutionary agent’s expression of himself and his own attitudes and beliefs. (Lyons 1982: 102)

Examples include such subjective expressions as:

- (1) • raising constructions, in which the “speaking subject” differs from the syntactic subject (Benveniste’s “*sujet d’énonciation*” vs. “*sujet d’énoncé*”) (*She’s going to give a lecture* vs. *There’s going to be an earthquake*)
- illocutionary uses of speech act and mental verbs (*I recognize the Senator from California*)
- epistemic modals (*That must be wrong*), concessives (*while*), focus particles (*even*), discourse markers (*besides*).

To adapt Lyons’ words about subjectivity, intersubjectivity in my view refers to 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 addressee’s attitudes and beliefs, most especially their “face” or “self-image” (Traugott 2003a). Such intersubjective expressions include expletives (“in your face” expressions such as insults; within groups some can signal solidarity, but to or from outsiders can signal aggression, e.g. “N-words”). It should be noted that this is a somewhat different view of intersubjectivity from that of Verhagen (2005), which is based in argumentation theory, and focuses on coordination between speaker’s and addressee’s cognitive systems, rather than on differences in linguistic coding. It is an entirely different view of subjectivity and intersubjectivity from that of Nuyts (2001, 2005) and Cornillie (2004), and indeed orthogonal to theirs. Nuyts defines subjectivity and intersubjectivity as follows (with reference to modality, but in ways generalizable beyond this domain):



form from its development into a coded meaning (see also De Smet and Verstraete 2006). For example, in her discussion of the development in the later fourteenth century of the parenthetical reformulation marker *I mean* Brinton (Forthcoming) shows it was a subjectified form of the literal *by X I mean* (= ‘intend’). By virtue of the fact that it is a reformulation marker used by speakers and writers to negotiate meaning “by presenting more explicit phrasing of the preceding NP, phrasing they believe will make their meaning clearer to readers” (Ibid.), parenthetical *I mean* has always been pragmatically intersubjective. Over time it has been used more intersubjectively to express emphasis and assertion of the veracity of an utterance (Ibid.), but it has not been intersubjectified, except in fixed phrases like *You know what I mean?* Heuristically, therefore, it may be better to think of (4) as (4’), although from a theoretical point of view this is not a viable formulation, since language-users do not have direct access to history and may therefore be unaware of what is subjectivized (though they often have indirect evidence of history from awareness of age-graded practices):

- (4’) (Heuristic for linguistic analysis)  
 non-/less subjectivized > subjectivized > intersubjectivized

Another issue is that Fitzmaurice (2004) suggests that there is a further step from intersubjective to “interactive”, especially in the case of discourse markers like *you know*, *you see*, *you say*, from the eighteenth century on. Her hypothesis is that this is a shift away from attention to the addressee to simply “keep[ing] things going in a conversation” (Ibid.: 438) and grabbing the interlocutor’s attention (Ibid.: 439). The examples cited suggest that there is probably not a newly coded meaning, but rather a pragmatic one arising in less clearly intersubjective contexts. Indeed, Fitzmaurice ends the article with “A question for further investigation is whether the interactive discourse marker function of an expression is strongest only where no implication [of speaker meanings<sub>ECT</sub>] may be drawn from the use of the expression” (Ibid.: 446).

Examples of subjectification include the following, the first two of which are dynamicized versions of (1):

- (5) • raising constructions arise from non-raising ones (Langacker 1990, 1995); in the case of *be going to*, we find expressions of motion with intent to act in the sixteenth century (5a), intentional non-motion expressions in the seventeenth century (5b), and finally raising ones in the nineteenth (5c), which express speaker assessment of the future:<sup>x</sup>
- a. *I am going to* visit the prisoner. Fare you well. (Exit) (1604 Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* III.iii.273 [LION, Oxford Shakespeare])<sup>xi</sup>
  - b. I ha’ forgot what I *was going to* say to you. (1663 Cowley, *Cutter of Coleman Street* V.ii [LION; English Prose Drama])
  - c. I am afraid there *is going to* be such a calm among us, that we must be forced to invent some mock Quarrels (1725 Odingsells, *The Bath Unmask’d* V.iii. [LION; English Prose Drama])
- epistemic modals may arise from verbs of desire or volition (*will*), concessives from temporals (Early Middle English *while* ‘during’ > Early Modern English ‘although’), focus markers from manner adverbials (Old English *anlice* ‘simply, especially’ > *only*), illocutionary from non-

illocutionary uses of speech act verbs (*promise* originates in the Latin past participle of *promittere* ‘send forth’) (Traugott and Dasher 2002)

- referent (“T/V”) honorifics may arise from non-honorifics (e.g., cooption in the Late Middle English period of plural second person *ye* for polite address to a singular second person) (Ibid.).

Examples of intersubjectification that I have cited in the past include the cooption of subjectified meanings specifically to signal addressee-orientation and interpersonal meanings. For example, I have used intersubjectified hedges arising from subjectified discourse markers as examples of intersubjectified meanings (e.g., some uses of *well* [Jucker 1997], *perhaps*, and hedged uses of *sort of*) (see Traugott and Dasher 2002). But, as indicated above, what may look like it is a case of intersubjectification actually may not be. If it is derivable from the context, it is only a case of increased pragmatic intersubjectivity. In other words, there may be more addressee-oriented uses, but unless a form-meaning pair has come to code intersubjectivity, we are not seeing intersubjectification (*-ation* being the important item here). This makes the formulation in (4) difficult to work with, hence the heuristic usefulness of (4'). Where a “dedicated” (coded) intersubjective meaning arises, however, it does by hypothesis arise from a previously subjectified meaning. An example is provided by the rise of addressee honorifics in Japanese from referent honorifics. To simplify, a referent honorific in Japanese points either respectfully or humiliatively to the subject referent.<sup>xii</sup> The construal of relationships is subjective, although since the referent is the addressee, intersubjectivity is inevitably involved. An addressee honorific, by contrast, indexes politeness or intimacy with respect to the addressee, and is part of a more general speech style or register, in which lexical items for eating or food may also be indexes; here attention is explicitly paid to the addressee, whether or not that individual is referred to. (6) summarizes the changes undergone by one example, *saburahu*:

- (6) Old Japanese *saburahu* ‘wait (for an occasion or order) in a specific location’ (non-honorific) > Late Old Japanese ‘Humble Subject be in the vicinity of Respected Referent’ (referent honorific; subjectified) > Early Middle Japanese *-saburau/-soorau* ‘be-Polite’ (addressee-honorific style; intersubjectified). (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 263-276)

As is true of all diachronic clines, the cline of (inter)subjectification in (4) is a testable schema summarizing tendencies for change observed over long periods of time and over several languages (Andersen 2001: 241-245). Once started down it does not have to be gone down all the way. It is “layered” (Hopper 1991) in the sense that earlier and later forms coexist and are in variation.

Neither subjectification nor intersubjectification entails grammaticalization. Evidence in the domain of subjectification comes from the development of speech act verbs and especially of their illocutionary uses. In the domain of intersubjectification it comes from the development in Japanese of polite uses of lexical items from earlier humiliative ones (e.g. *moosu* ‘say’, Traugott and Dasher 2002: 261). Nevertheless, there is a strong correlation between grammaticalization and subjectification, and a weaker one between grammaticalization and intersubjectification. In order to understand this we need to consider the distinction between grammaticality and grammaticalization.

### 3. Grammaticality and grammaticalization

Just as we need to distinguish the synchronic cline of (inter)subjectivity from the diachronic cline of (inter)subjectification, so we need to distinguish the synchronic cline of grammaticality (a way of organizing data) from the diachronic cline of grammaticalization (a schema of attested tendencies over time).

Synchronic clines of grammaticality can be established with varying degrees of granularity. Typically this is done with reference to degrees of fusion. A highly schematic example appears in (7) (based on Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994: 40):

(7) phrase or word -- non-bound gram -- bound gram

A more articulated cline, also based on degrees of fusion, is proposed in Brinton and Traugott (2005: 93). Here a distinction is made between periphrases that are relatively free, but have considerable internal fusion, e.g. *be going to, as far as*; semi-bound function words and clitics like *of, 'll*, possessive clitic *-'s*; semi-productive affixes like grammatical derivational *-er*; and productive affixes like inflectional plural *-'s*. While degree of fusion is synchronically an independently valid measure of form-meaning pairs, interest in it derives from the fact that it is seen at the outcome of diachronic changes known as grammaticalization:

[T]he change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions. (Hopper and Traugott 2003 [1993]: 18)<sup>xiii</sup>

The synchronic cline in (7) therefore derives its theoretical interest from diachronic ones such as those in (8):

(8) a. phrase or word > non-bound gram > bound gram  
b. lexical/constructional item > grammatical item > more grammatical item

Again for heuristic purposes, it may be useful to think of (8b) in terms of (8b'), although, like (4') this has no theoretical validity:

(8b') (Heuristic of linguistic analysis)  
lexical/constructional item > grammaticalized item > more grammaticalized item

While not restricted to grammaticalization, subjectification is more likely to occur in grammaticalization than in lexicalization or in semantic change in general,<sup>xiv</sup> presumably because grammaticalization by definition involves recruitment of items to mark the speaker's perspective on factors such as:

- (9)
- who does what to whom (argument structure)
  - how the proposition (ideational expression) is related to speech time or to the temporality of another proposition (tense)
  - whether the situation is perspectivized as continuing or not (aspect)

- whether the situation is relativized to the speaker's beliefs (modality, mood)
- whether entities referred to are construed as same or different (pronouns, indexicals)
- which part of a clause is viewed as topic or focus
- how utterances are connected to each other (connectives, discourse markers)

However, not all grammaticalization is equally likely to involve equal degrees of subjectification,<sup>xv</sup> and some may involve little or no subjectification.<sup>xvi</sup> For example, case markers are often derived from terms for relational space or body parts (Heine and Kuteva 2002), e.g. Old Hungarian *vilag* 'world' + *béle* 'world + guts:into' > Modern Hungarian *világba* 'world:into' (Anttila 1989 [1972]: 149). Subjectification is minimally involved here, since the basic function of argument structure is ideational: to express events or situations and the participants in them. However, ideational case may be used pragmatically for non-ideational purposes, see e.g. the choice of accusative or dative case in German as "a function of the degree to which the person is affected, as well as the speaker's subjective assessment of this effect" (Zubin 1975: 186).

Subjectification is more likely to occur in primary grammaticalization (the shift from lexical/constructional to grammatical) than in secondary grammaticalization (the development of already grammatical material into more grammatical material). This is because primary grammaticalization often requires prior strengthening of pragmatic inferences that arise in very specific linguistic contexts prior to their semanticization and reanalysis as grammatical elements. Further grammaticalization, however, often involves development into automatized structures (especially in the case of inflections). The fewer the options become, the less likely subjectification will be. This can be regarded as part of the larger constraint, noted in Dahl (2004: 84) that none of "the usual Gricean principles" are operative if a morpheme is truly obligatory.

As will be discussed in more detail at the end of Section 6, subjectified elements tend to be positioned at the periphery of a constituent or clause (see Bybee 1985 on the shifting of epistemic modals to the periphery of a complex verbal construction, Suzuki 1998 on the development of the Japanese noun *wake* 'reason' into an utterance-final 'explanatory discourse-marker' translatable as 'no wonder' or 'you see'). The migration of subjectified elements to the periphery of the phrase, clause, or sentence would not be considered a case of grammaticalization by those who take structural scope-reduction and condensation to be criterial to grammaticalization (Lehmann 1995 [1982]: 144).<sup>xvii</sup> Limiting grammaticalization to reduction and condensation appears to be too restrictive, however. They pertain to certain domains of grammaticalization such as the development of case and tense, but not to other domains such as epistemic modality, connectives, discourse markers, etc., where scope increase is typical of grammaticalization (Tabor and Traugott 1998, Traugott 2003b).

Intersubjectification intersects less extensively with grammaticalization. In most languages it is grammaticalized only into some discourse markers and interjections. It is strongly grammaticalized, in the sense of being expressed morphologically, in only a few languages, e.g., Japanese, where verbal endings may index politeness (see (6) above).<sup>xviii</sup>

#### 4. Three brief case studies

In this section I provide brief sketches of the history of three NP of NP patterns: *a piece of*, *a bit of* and *a shred of*. They reveal sufficient similarities and yet differences that they illustrate well what has become a truism in work on grammaticalization: each string has its own history, but conforms to general schematic change-types in ways that are partly constrained by the particularities of the original meaning-form relationship. In Present Day English at least *a bit of* and *a shred of* are polysemous, with both Partitive ('unit of') and Degree Modifier ('some') functions, but in earlier English only the Partitive use is found. The development of the Degree Modifier uses illustrates grammaticalization, and, in two of the cases discussed here, further partial restriction to a semantically negative polarity context. It also illustrates subjectification, and, in the case of *a bit of*, pragmatic intersubjectification. The three constructions are part of a larger set of Partitive > Degree Modifier changes that occurred mainly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (for historical studies of *kind of*, *sort of* see e.g., Denison 2002 and references therein; of *a bunch of*, *lots of* Brems 2003; and of *a kind of*, *a sort of*, *a bit of*, *a lot of*, *a shred of* Traugott 2006, Forthcoming b, c).

Partitive constructions in Present Day English have rather idiosyncratic characteristics with respect to presence or absence of the indefinite article *a* in either NP and the extent to which they allow an unbounded (non-mass) complement in NP2 (see *a piece/?shred of an apple* vs. *a piece/shred of apple*), but an idealized, prototypical schema for Partitives is:

- (9) [NP1 [of NP2]]  
 Head + Modifier/Complement  
 Unit + Unbounded N  
 (*not*) *a shred of apple*

The Partitive construction came into being in the Middle English period when the -'s genitive inflection as in *an bite brædess* 'a bit bread:GEN', was replaced by the prepositional phrase with *of* (which meant 'out of' in Old English).

The NP1 of Partitives can usually be substituted by *a piece/portion/unit of*. By contrast, binominal Degree Modifier constructions typically have the schema in (10), and NP1 can usually be substituted by a quantifier like *some/much* (negative *no/not any/not much*):

- (10) [[NP1 of] NP2]  
 Modifier + Head  
 Quant + Unbounded N  
 (*not*) *a shred of beauty*

There are several criteria for distinguishing Degree Modifier constructions with NP heads from Partitive constructions (see Denison 2002).<sup>xix</sup> These include:

- (11) a. agreement patterns: in the Partitive the initial determiner agrees in number with N1 (*these kinds of mouse*), but in the Degree Modifier construction it can agree with N2 (*these kind of mice*), at least in colloquial use  
 b. in the Partitive NP2 may be preposed (*of an apple a bit*), but not in the Degree Modifier construction (*\*of a fraud a bit*)

- c. in the Degree Modifier but not the Partitive construction, *a NI of* can be replaced by one word (*a bit of a beauty = rather/quite a beauty*)
- d. only the Degree Modifier may have an Adverb form that collocates with Adjectives (*a bit/\*piece squeamish*) or Verbs (*I sort of/\*unit of regretted it*) (although not all do)
- e. only the Degree Modifier may have adjunct Adverb variants (*I wanted it a bit/sort of/\*unit*) (although not all do)
- f. some Partitives do not have or have only marginal Degree Modifier construction polysemies (*a piece/unit/portion of*)

#### 4.1 A sketch of the history of a piece of

*Piece* was borrowed from French in Early Middle English in the meaning ‘fragment, scrap, slice, portion’. Initially it is found in a binominal Partitive construction with a concrete complement (food, garment, building, precious metal, etc). In later uses, it can be found with negative evaluations implying ‘too small, inadequate’ (12c).

##### (12) Stage I: Partitive

- a. In *þe* assaut some ... breke a *pece of þe* wal  
‘In the assault some ... broke a piece of the wall’ (c1325 Glo. *Chron.A* 11590 [MED *pece* 2a])
- b. Gave them *a piece of a honeycomb* to eat (1713 Henry, *Catech. Youth* in *Wks.* (1853) II. 169/1 [OED *piece* 2a])
- c. The spirit which animated her father when he went to housekeeping in *a piece of a house* without any front window (1884 *Harper's New Monthly Mag.* 69 303 [OED *piece* 6d, “US regional”])

By the end of the fourteenth century the complement had been generalized to animate and also abstract NP2 contexts. *A piece of* is still Partitive, but had been enriched with the quantifier meaning. It could now imply ‘a small amount’. In (13b) we find *peece* used either meaning ‘exemplar’ or (an early usage) ‘person’<sup>xx</sup>.

##### (13) Stage II: Extended Partitive

- a. Dorus, whilom king of Grece ... hadde *of infortune a piece*  
‘Dorus, once king of Greece ... had of misfortunate a piece (a1393 Gower, *Confessio Amantis* (Fairf.) V. 1338 [OED *piece*, 5a]; note preposed *of infortune*)
- b. O Pretious *peece of villany!* are you vnchang'd? (1615 Tomkis, *Albumazar* V. ix. sig. I2v [OED *piece*, 5c])

Toward the end of the sixteenth century we find examples in which a human subject is characterized as a ‘piece’ of a profession (logician/doctor/poet). There is some indeterminacy between the Partitive reading (a small part/exemplar of a poet/logician) and a Degree Modifier reading (a poet/logician to a certain degree, ‘somewhat of a poet’). This appears to be the only context in which a Degree Modifier developed robustly.

##### (14) Stage III: Degree Modifier

- a. If I had not beene *a peece of a Logician* before I came to him. (1586 Sidney, *Apol. Poetrie* (1595) sig. B1v [OED *piece*, 6d])

- b. methinkes I am *a piece of a Poet* already, there's such a whistling in my pate. (1640 Anon, *The Knave in Graine* I.i (LION; English Prose Drama])

A diary entry shows that at least one writer analogized the Degree Modifier with Adverbs like *greatly* that do not require a following NP:

- (15) A mayd ... dyd cutt her thrott *a-pesse*, and after she lepyd in-to a welle and drownyd yr seyllff  
 ‘A maid ... did cut her throat a bit, and afterwards she lept into a well and drowned her self’ (1559 Machyn, *Diary* July (1848) 205 (OED *piece*, 10b))

(15) is the only example of its kind in my data base. Although indicative of an innovation by a speaker, it does not represent a change, as far as the data base allows us to identify one. From the perspective taken here, change requires both innovation and shared (replicated) adoption by a community of speakers (Weinreich, Herzog, and Labov 1968).

*A piece of* underwent grammaticalization to the extent that it was generalized to non-breakable (*house*) and mass noun (*villany*) complements (“host-class” expansion; see Himmelmann 2004) at Stage II; in this context there was pragmatic expansion in so far as ‘unit of mass noun’ came to imply scalar quantification. At Stage III there was syntactic expansion in that the NP of NP string now had two potential syntactic analyses, and also semantic/pragmatic expansion in that in the new polysemy NP1 (*a piece*) was reanalyzed as ‘to some extent’ and bleached of partitive meaning (but only in restricted contexts). Himmelmann (2004) considers host-class, syntactic, and semantic/pragmatic expansion as criterial for grammaticalization.<sup>xxi</sup> Another way to think of this is that, as a new polysemy arises that is an instance of primary grammaticalization, all three aspects of form-meaning pairings (lexical collocation, syntactic structure, and semantics-pragmatics) change (but not necessarily at the same time).

#### 4.2 *A sketch of the history of a bit of*

It seems that *a piece of* is primarily a Partitive in Modern English, despite some marginal degree Modifier developments. In this respect it contrasts sharply with *a bit of*. The history of *a bit of* appears to start with a nominalized expression meaning ‘biting’ (OED). We may call this Stage 0 (Pre-Partitive):

- (16) Stage 0: Pre-Partitive
- a. In to the pyne of helle .. for *the bytt of an Appel*  
 ‘Into the suffering of Hell...for the biting of an apple’ (c.1400 *Ancr. Recl.* 22/25 [MED *bite* 3.b.])
  - b. this appyl...*a bete therof* thou take  
 ‘This apple, a bite of it take’ (c.1475 *Ludus* C. 23/220 [Ibid.]; note the preposing of *a bete*)

Recall that Old English *of* meant ‘out of’ before it came to be the default Preposition. Metonymic transfer from biting out of something to the result of the biting was semanticized, and *bite* came to mean ‘piece bitten out, morsel’ (i.e. a unit of a size that could be bitten out). Indeed, *bete* in (16b) could be interpreted not as ‘a bite’ but as ‘a mouthful’. This is a semantic/pragmatic “bridging” context (see Heine 2002: 84, Enfield

2003:28). We may call this ‘mouthful’ polysemy Stage I: Partitive. An early example is (17), still with the genitive case:

- (17) Stage I: Partitive ‘morsel, unit bitten out’  
He badd tatt gho sholldde himm ec / *An bite brædess brinnngenn*  
‘He commanded that she should him also a bite/bit of bread bring’ (c.1200  
Orm 8640 [MED *bite* 3.a.]

By the earlier part of the seventeenth century the complement had been generalized to non-food, often with a contextual implicature that the unit was a small, insufficient, or inadequate part of the pragmatic Focus (NP2). This is still Partitive, but importantly for later reinterpretation as a Degree Modifier, the unit (NP1) has been bleached of the literal meaning ‘mouthful’, and NP2 (the complement) can be abstract (18a).

- (18) Stage II: Extended Partitive
- a. The fragments, scraps, *the bits*, and greazie reliques of her ore-eaten *faith* (1606 Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, V.ii.159 [OED *bit* 2, 3.a.]; note the metaphorical context of *ore-eaten faith* here)
  - b. If so be as ow you 'ont blab, I'll tell you *a bit of a secret*  
‘If it be as how you won't blab, ....’ (1833 Clifford, *The Highwayman of 1770*, I.ii. [LION; English Prose Drama])

By the eighteenth century we begin to find *a bit of* meaning ‘somewhat of/rather/quite’, typically before a head with an indefinite article, and an evaluative behavioral term (*jilt*, *bastard*, *hypocrite*, *fool*). In other words, it is a Degree Modifier, scaling NP2 (the head) down (19a, b), or approximating it (19c). This is Stage III. Some examples are (from our modern perspective at least) ambiguous bridging examples: does (19b) refer to a small amount of bastard business, or to somewhat bastard(ly) business, does (19d) refer to a small secret or (more probably in the context) something somewhat secret? It is instructive to compare (18b) with (19d). In (18b) *a bit of a secret* appears to mean ‘a small confidence, a small piece of information that is meant to be kept secret’, given the context in which the speaker allegedly knows something and is willing to impart it if it won't be blabbed. But in (19d) the secret is not known, indeed, the speaker does not even know if there is a secret; what remains to be found out is whether there is a secret and how big it is.

- (19) Stage III: Degree Modifier
- a. Your beauty is *a little bit of a jilt* (1771 S. Foote, *Maid of Bath* [OED *bit* 2, 4.b.]
  - b. If you be a lord, it must be *a bit of bastard business* (1810 W. Hickey, *Mem* [OED *bit* 2, 4.h.]
  - c. *Wal.* A sword--have I-- (*confused*) --Why yes, it is *a bit of a* kind of a sword, as you say, to be sure- (1794 Morton, *The Children in the Wood* I.iii. [LION; English Prose Drama]; not a piece of a sword, but like one)
  - d. (Aside) Oh, ho! there's *a bit of a secret*, and I must be master of it (1769 Morton, *Way to Get Married* I.ii. [LION; English Prose Drama])

- e. "I've got something to tell you, my dear," said Caleb in his hesitating way... "You see, I've been *a bit of a fool* again, and put my name to a bill" (1871 Eliott, *Middlemarch* [UVa]).

As a Degree Modifier *a bit of* was extended to syntactic contexts prototypical for members of its class, specifically pre-Adjectival position, where it functions as an Adverb. This may have well have been by direct analogy with other Degree Modifiers like *quite* and *very*.

(20) Stage IV: Adverb Degree Modifier

I would not be *a bit wiser, a bit richer, a bit taller, a bit shorter*, than I am at this Instant (1723 Steele, *The Conscious Lovers* III.i [LION; English Prose Drama])

This Adverb Degree Modifier use has been available since the seventeenth century but is considered "more or less vulgar" by Stoffel (1901) and "slang" by the OED. In the eighteenth century it developed further into an Adverb that can be used without a head (21a), and even as a free adjunct in responses (21b). The latter usually occurs in the context of a negative, or of negative-conveying intonation.

(21) Stage V: Adjunct

- a. I tell ye, I zee'd un gi' Susan a letter, an' I dan't like it *a bit*. (1800 Morton, *Speed the Plough* II.iii. [LION; English Prose Drama])  
 b. A. Hear me. B. Not *a bit* (1739 Baker, *The Cit Turn'd Gentleman* [LION; English Prose Drama])

*A bit of* has undergone grammaticalization to the extent that it was generalized to non-edible and abstract noun complements (host-class expansion) at Stage II; in this context there was pragmatic expansion in so far as 'unit of mass noun' came to imply negatively evaluated scalar quantification (*the bits of her ore-eaten faith* are small parts of faith, implying 'too small', in this context, even 'left-over'). At Stage III there was syntactic expansion in that the NP of NP string now had two syntactic analyses, and also semantic/pragmatic expansion in that in the new polysemy NP1 (*a bit*) was enriched as a quantifier and bleached of partitive meaning. At Stages IV and V there was further syntactic expansion to Adverb and free adjunct use.

With respect to subjectification, *a bit of* was subjectified at Stage III (endowed with quantificational scalar meaning 'somewhat', a "downtoning" or understating meaning like that of *a little*). In contexts where the head is lexically negative or can be expected to be negatively interpreted, but in not negative syntax, *a bit (of)* is used intersubjectively as a hedge (see 19a, b). We may say it has been pragmatically intersubjectified, but not semantically so because it does not code semantic intersubjectivity. Note that in (19e) the speaker is attempting to save his own face, but clearly in the context of paying attention to the addressee: *I've got something to tell you ... You see*). Being a downtoner, *a bit of* is favored with negatively evaluated heads as in (19a, b, e), or with neutral ones (19c, d), but it is not likely to be used, except in special circumstances, with positive heads, especially of people:

- (22) ?Your friend is *a bit of a beauty*.

I have not found such examples in the data bases used, but one could imagine a context for this, where the speaker for some reason does not want to say something too positive about a third person, perhaps because the addressee is perceived to be jealous, or because the speaker is being ironic.

#### 4.3 A sketch of the history of a shred of

In Old English *a shred of* meant ‘a fragment cut or broken off from fruit, vegetable, textile, coin, vessel’. In Middle English it was generalized to bodies (physical bodies and the symbolic Host) but it still meant ‘unit of X’.

- (23) Stage I: Partitive  
With strengthe of his blast / The white [dragon] brent than rede, / That of  
*him* nas founden *a schrede* / Bot dust  
‘With the strength of his blast, the white dragon burned the red, so that of  
him (the red) not a shred was found, only dust’ (c1300 *Arth & M* 1540  
[MED *shrede* a]); note the preposing)

In the sixteenth century it was generalized to further contexts including language, mankind and nature. The effect of *a shred of* was that the pragmatic focus (NP2) was often evaluated as small, insufficient, inadequate, but the construction is still Partitive; NP1 may still be modified by an Adjective.

- (24) Stage II: Extended Partitive  
a. *Suche shredis of sentence* strowed in the shop of ancient Aritippus  
‘Such scraps of wisdom strown in ancient Aritippus’ shop’ (1529  
Skelton Sp. Parrot 94 [OED *shred* 6])  
b. *A despis’d Shred of mankind* (1645 G. Daniel, Poems [OED *shred* 6])

This extension appears to have been an essential step in the development of the Degree Modifier. In the nineteenth century a polysemy arose from reanalysis of NP1 as a quantifier or Degree Modifier (not ‘(smallest) part of’ but ‘some/any’) with NP2 as head only when NP2 was a mass noun (e.g. *mankind*). As a Degree Modifier, *a shred of* requires an abstract mass noun (typically *evidence, character, hope, reputation, credibility*) that is normally neutrally or positively evaluated. By the twentieth century this Degree Modifier was largely, but not obligatorily, restricted to negative polarity syntax (negation, interrogative, conditional, comparative, etc., see Israel 1996, 2004).

- (25) Stage III: Degree Modifier  
a. Loto has not *a shred of beauty*. She is a big, angular, raw-boned  
Normande, with a rough voice, and a villainous patois (1867 Ouida,  
*Under Two Flags* [Chadwyck-Healey, 19thC Fiction])  
b. You’re so worthless, you can’t even recognize *the shred of petty  
virtues* in others, some of which I still have (1965 Osborne, *A Patriot  
for Me*, III. v. [Chadwyck-Healey, 20thC drama]; note singular *shred*  
with plural head, not *shreds of petty virtue*)

*A shred of* has undergone grammaticalization to the extent that it was generalized to abstract Ns (host-class expansion) at Stage II; in this context there was pragmatic expansion in so far as ‘unit of mass noun’ came to imply negatively evaluated scalar

quantification (*shredis of sentence* are small parts of wisdom, implying ‘too small’). At Stage III there was syntactic expansion in that the NP of NP string now had two syntactic analyses, and also semantic/pragmatic expansion in that in the new polysemy NP1 (*a shred*) was enriched as a quantifier and bleached of partitive meaning. To date *a shred of* has not undergone further, secondary grammaticalization, for example, expansion to pre-Adjectival position (*\*a shred nice*) or to adjunct status (*\*I opened it a shred*; Q. *Did you like the movie?* A. *\*A shred*), in contrast with e.g. *a bit/sort of* (see (21)).<sup>xxii</sup>

With respect to subjectification, the semanticization of quantifier meaning is a type of subjectification (to scalar meaning). But there has been no pragmatic, let alone, coded intersubjectification: *a shred of* is not used as a hedge (*\*Your beauty is a shred of a jilt*). This appears to be related to the fact that *a shred of* as a Degree Modifier is restricted to positively evaluated heads (*honesty, evidence, decency, reputation*).

#### 4.4. Summary and some comments

By hypothesis, a shift to meanings that are used evaluatively to assess not just more or less quantity, but also more or less quality, as in the case of Degree Modifiers or Focus Particles (see König 1991), always involves subjectification: the evaluative invited inferences are semanticized as part of the meaning of the item that comes to index scalarity. Those lexical items that initially refer to small quantities, and, by extension, low quality, tend to become negative polarity items. This involves both further grammaticalization (restriction in terms of syntactic contexts, see ft. xix) and further subjectification in that the speaker evaluates not only elements on a scale, but the scale itself. One feature of negative polarity is that meanings that would normally be understating in positive contexts (*a bit (of), a shred of*) are reversed and in this context are emphatic (Israel 1996). While *a bit* means ‘to some extent’, *not a bit* means ‘to no extent, not at all’. In discussing the development of the complex negative phrase in French *ne ... pas* ‘not’, Eckardt (2006: 169, drawing on Krifka 1995) hypothesizes that negative polarity sensitivity is “the result of emphatic focusing and a specific kind of focus alternatives”. In other words, speakers assessing alternatives on a scale of probability or saliency, may use a quantifier such as *bit, shred*, Fr. *pas* (‘step’), once it has lost its original literal meaning, as an emphatic focus marker to signal that the following NP is the least probable or salient among a set of alternative. The discourse reasons for such assessments include the intention “to contravene scalar expectations among interlocutors, whether explicit or implicit” (Gutiérrez-Rexach and Schwenter 2002). Most emphatics are speaker-oriented claims about extreme ends of scales. But some may be used intersubjectively in certain contexts for aggression (being “in” rather than “saving” Addressee’s face), e.g., Du. *kanker* ‘cancer’, *pest* ‘plague’, *pokken* ‘smallpox’ (Hoeksema 2001: 178) (all “positive” polarity items, i.e. they do not require negative polarity contexts).

Some negative polarity items may eventually come to be negation markers in a process usually referred to as the Jespersen Cycle (Jespersen 1917), whereby a negation marker such as French *ne* comes to be associated in a complex negative phrase with a term referring to a small unit, in this case *pas* ‘step’, and eventually *pas* comes to be used alone as the marker of negation (see Eckardt 2006 on the history of French, Schwenter 2006 on cognates in contemporary Catalan, Italian, and Brazilian Portuguese). It appears that at least subjectification and perhaps pragmatic intersubjectification are involved in the early development of the Jespersen Cycle. However, they cease to operate once the subjectivized element comes to be the stand-alone grammatical marker (at which point it

has been bleached not only of its original ‘unit’ meaning, but also of its subjective emphatic meaning).

## 5. Mechanisms of and motivations for change in grammaticalization and (inter)subjectification

Mechanisms of change have to do with the ‘how’ of change in the mind of speaker and hearer. Harris and Campbell (1995) have claimed that there are only two basic internal mechanisms for syntactic change: reanalysis and extension.<sup>xxiii</sup> Recently, other possible mechanisms have been explored, such as priming, routinization, and other production/parsing processes (see Garrod n.d.).

As Campbell and Harris see it, while reanalysis involves changes in the underlying structure, extension (which in their view, overlaps with analogy) involves changes in the surface manifestation of a pattern (Harris and Campbell 1995: 50-53). This distinction is problematic in some of its details, since any extension that becomes institutionalized and acquires the status of a change rather than merely an innovation, entails at least some minimal reanalysis of the underlying specification. For example, analogical extension of Partitives to non-countable hosts (e.g. *a bit of to faith*) entails a reanalysis of the restriction that the complement (NP2) is countable. Nevertheless, the distinction between changes that concern constituency, hierarchical structure, category, grammatical relations, or boundary types, and similar primarily “covert” aspects of syntagmatic linguistic structure on the one hand (reanalysis), and changes based on overt patterns and templates that serve as exemplars on the other (analogy), is a useful one (Hopper and Traugott 2003 [1993]). Famously, Meillet initially conceived of grammaticalization as reanalysis (Meillet (1958 [1912])), and much has since been written about the extent to which grammaticalization and reanalysis are independent of each other (see Dahl 2004: 170-178 for a summary of arguments). It seems safe to say that grammaticalization requires structural reanalysis, but that not all reanalysis, e.g. word order change, is necessarily grammaticalization. The more work has been done on the contexts for grammaticalization, the more it has become clear that it is a reanalysis that occurs very locally and involves fine-grained changes that are not necessarily totally new in the language in the way Meillet appears to have envisioned when he said that grammaticalization “introduit des catégories qui n’avaient pas d’expression linguistique, transforme l’ensemble du système”<sup>xxiv</sup> (Meillet 1958 [1917]: 133). For example, addressing the issue from radically different perspectives, Bybee (2006: 727) has recently suggested that “new constructions are created out of specific instances of old general constructions”, while Kiparsky (Forthcoming) has argued that much of grammaticalization arises out of optimization (generalization) of structures in a restrictive theory of analogy.<sup>xxv</sup>

The development of the Partitives into Degree Modifiers, and, in the case of *a bit of*, into an Adverb and Adjunct illustrate well the interdependence of reanalysis and extension. The head-modifier shift is clearly reanalysis, the other changes are largely analogies of various kinds. For the constructions in question, each change was new for the string. While Degree Modifiers had existed since earliest times in English (e.g. *swi-e* ‘very’), the rise of a whole class of binominal Degree Modifiers in the eighteenth century (*a bit of*, *lot of*, (*a*) *sort/kind of*, etc.) was new for Degree Modifiers, since until then they had been Adverbs with Adjective or Verb heads (or, in a few cases, Adverbs used as free adjuncts). Once the head-modifier shift had occurred it provided the model for several

new Degree Modifiers either of binominal form (*a shred of*) or Adverb + nominal head in form (*rather fun*) (both nineteenth century developments).

Just as two internal mechanisms have been proposed for syntactic change, so two have been proposed for semantic change: conceptual metonymy and metaphor (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 27-34). The first mechanism, conceptual metonymy, is analogous to reanalysis, and the second, metaphor, is analogous to analogy or generalization based on pattern match (Anttila 1992).

Conceptual metonymic shift in the sense intended here involves a covert shift, e.g. the semanticization of an earlier pragmatic implicature or invited inference; in the case of Degree Modifiers, the semanticization of the implicature of quantity from units and portions, in certain contexts. Metaphorical change is, by contrast, based on analogical similarities. Just as reanalysis and analogy are interdependent, so are conceptual metonymy and metaphor. Much of what looks like metaphorical change can actually be seen to be the result of metonymic change when contexts for the change are taken into account. Presumably, in terms of usage, Shakespeare's 'The fragments, scraps, *the bits*, and greazie reliques *of her ore-eaten faith*' cited in (18a) is an instance of metaphor. Shattered by Cressida's unfaithfulness to him when she leaves him for Diomedes, Troilus disgustedly conceptualizes her new promises to Diomedes in terms of nasty morsels of food left over from others. Because such metaphors have mass and abstract heads, they enabled the reanalysis as Degree Modifier, but the semantic change Partitive > Degree Modifier is not a case of metaphorization: it is subjectification, the reanalysis of the pragmatically inferrable scalar evaluations arising by conceptual metonymy in the context of utterances like (17) and (18) as semantically coded scalar, quantitative meanings. Subjectification is therefore a subtype of semantic reanalysis, a mechanism.

Likewise, when intersubjectification occurs, pragmatic intersubjective meanings that are pragmatically inferrable from the context (or, as in the case of *If you please*, syntactic contexts) come to be coded as part of the semantics of an item. Genuine cases of intersubjectification as opposed to intersubjective uses of items are hard to identify outside of languages like Japanese. But where it occurs, like subjectification it is a semantic reanalysis, and a mechanism.

What might motivate grammaticalization, in other words, what might be the reason for the change? As we have seen, in many cases, primary grammaticalization follows pragmatic changes and changes in distribution. In the case of *a bit of* and *a shred of*, it followed the pragmatic strengthening of the literal Partitives as quantificational (pragmatic subjectification), and host-class expansion to more nominal complements, especially mass complements. But we cannot say it was caused by these changes.<sup>xxvi</sup> Although Partitive *a piece of* underwent several of the same types of changes as *a bit of* and *a shred of*, it did not become as productive as they in the Degree Modifier function, nor did it participate in negative polarity (perhaps because *piece* was conceptualized as larger than *bit* or *shred*?).<sup>xxvii</sup> Haspelmath (1999: 1054-1055) has provided a fairly detailed account of how grammaticalization might be motivated. He invokes a number of "ecological" factors, among them unconscious processing, routinization, maxims of action and invisible hand processes whereby unintended results arise from action (see Keller 1994). Haspelmath suggests that grammaticalization arises out of speakers' desire to "be extravagant", i.e. "Talk in such a way that you are noticed" (p. 1055). The term "extravagant" is, as he admits, unfortunate, since most grammaticalization involves fairly general meanings to start with. Furthermore, "Talk in such a way that you are noticed" implies a degree of consciousness that is inconsistent with the concept of unconscious

acts leading to change. However, the examples discussed here do suggest that some combination of a maxims must be at work, such as “Talk like the others talk” (with pragmatic invited inferences of quantification) and “Try something very similar that will not be incomprehensible” (and therefore does not violate the maxim “Talk in such a way that you are understood”).

What might motivate subjectification? By hypothesis it is online production in the flow of speech (in certain cases, writing may be involved too, as in the case of the development of discourse connectives such as *in fact*, *concerning*). In other words, it is the subjectivity of the speech event. This hypothesis is in direct opposition to the many models of language change that are based on the assumption that language change is triggered by child language acquisition, and are therefore hearer models (e.g. Lightfoot 1999). A hearer/perception model explains little or nothing about why subjectification occurs at all. As speakers, we tend to understand in terms of our own schemas, so why would we constantly try to process from the perspective of the interlocutor, enrich the interlocutor’s subjective perspective, and semanticize it? Furthermore, it explains nothing about why subjectification would precede intersubjectification.

Grammaticalization and especially (inter)subjectification suggest that a passive view of change is not sufficient. The fine-grainedness of the collocations and the social implications of the changes suggest not only children but also teens and adults play a role in change (see Bergs 2005 on evidence for change as communally as well as generationally motivated; also Croft 2000, Traugott and Dasher 2002, Milroy Forthcoming). Recent work on frequency as a contributing factor in grammaticalization (e.g. Bybee and Hopper 2001, Bybee 2003, 2006) further shows that a production model is needed, and recent processing studies have suggested that production factors may override consideration of hearers’ likely ease of perception (Wasow 1997).

Because of the deictic shifts of Speaker and Addressee in the speaking dyad, we need a model of change that accounts for how members of the dyad interact, and above all a production model of how speakers construct “arguments about propositions, and [assign] degrees or statements of confidence to those propositions” (Moxey and Sanford 1997: 229).

## 6. Operationalizing subjectification

Recently there have been some interesting attempts to operationalize subjectification. The aim is to move from the admittedly rather vague notion of ambient subjectivity and interlocutor interaction as a motivating force in subjectification, toward identifying the types of linguistic context in which one might expect to find evidence for subjectification. This work draws on quantitative analysis of variation involving subjectivity in contemporary corpora (cf. Scheibman 2002).

Investigating “the increasingly speaker-based construal of (counter-)expectation” as represented by middle-marked *salirse* ‘leave (despite obstacles/surreptitiously)’ from Old Spanish to present-day Mexico City Spanish, Aaron and Torres Cacoullous (2005: 609) suggest the following as structural correlates of subjectivity which can be considered likely contexts in which the subjectification of *salirse* occurred:

- (26) a. 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular referents close to the speaker
- b. positive polarity
- c. past tenses

The first factor, person, can be understood as reflecting the hypothesis that 1<sup>st</sup> persons and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons with a close relationship to the speaker (e.g. family membership), are emotionally salient, in contrast to casual acquaintances (Ibid.: 616). Likewise the temporal factor reflects emotional engagement in past narrative. The positive polarity factor (understood as affirmative contexts) reflects the fact that expression of counter-expectation would be incongruous with negation (Ibid.: 618). The study shows that, even though *salirse* has counter-expectation meanings from the time of the earliest documents (twelfth century), there has been a dramatic increase in the use of 1<sup>st</sup> person subjects, and there is robust evidence of the kind of change that is often mentioned in grammaticalization studies: the gradual loss of the preposition *de* ‘from’ and its absorption of its contextual meaning “into the *salirse* form itself” (Ibid.: 621). Overall there has been “increasingly speaker-based construal of (counter-) expectation, as the use of the form extends to situations involving non-physical abstract, even social, force dynamics” (Aaron and Torres Cacoullós 2005: 629).

In a complementary paper Torres Cacoullós and Schwenter (Forthcoming) explore ways to operationalize degrees of subjectification as exemplified by the development of Old Spanish *pesar de* ‘regret of’ into the concessive connectives *a pesar de (que)* ‘in spite of (that)’. They construe subjectification in this case as “the evolution of the opposition by an outside force into the superimposition of the speaker’s viewpoint onto the viewpoint of another” (p. 352). Like Aaron and Torres Cacoullós they seek to identify subjectification in the expansion of certain types of functional range. The key factors in their study are:

- (27) a. shift from non-coreferentiality to co-referentiality of the subject of the main verb and the adnominal genitive
- b. extension to subjunctive verb forms
- c. preposing of *a pesar de*, i.e. increase in syntactic scope

Without seeking to operationalize subjectification, but nevertheless to identify likely linguistic contexts for subjectification, Horie and Kondo (2004) show that in the Kansai Dialect of Japanese, what they consider to be the subjectivized negative appears predominantly in:

- (28) a. first person contexts
- b. with verbs of evaluative attitude and cognition.

These are important studies that seek to find structural groundings for the admittedly rather imprecise notion of subjectification. However, because the relevant factors are so different, these variation- and multivariate analysis-based studies raise the question whether it is possible to identify factors of subjectification that are replicable across languages and construction-types, independently of those that might be particular to a construction.

By hypothesis, it seems likely that shifts in the referent of the subject would generally be relevant to the development of subjective meanings. Shifts toward first person subjects are not necessary correlates of or indicators of subjectivity since subjectification may be most apparent precisely where there is no overt subject, first person or otherwise (Scheibman 2002: 167 herself cautions that “the presence of *I* does

not necessarily subjectify on its own”). Obvious examples include case of the raising construction (*There’s going to be an earthquake*), and discourse markers like *y’know*, *God wot*, etc. (Brinton 1996). It seems likely that when the subjectification is orientation toward a negative evaluation, the locus of change will be comments about non-first persons, especially third persons (“They” are negatively evaluated in some way), see Kranich (2006) on the development of progressives with *always*, as in *Paul is always writing me letters* (+> ‘and I find this aggravating’) as opposed to non-evaluative *Paul always writes me letters*.

Another likely locus for subjectification is transitivity. In an early study, Zubin (1975: 19-20) suggested that in German when there is case alternation between dative and accusative, the speaker subjectively perspectivizes the situation, and assesses a participant’s contribution (including his or her own) as less vivid, relatively static (accusative) or more vivid, affected (dative). Thompson and Hopper (2001) suggested that a correlation between low transitivity and subjectivity in conversation is a function of the fact that “our talk is mostly about ‘how things are from our perspective’ ... these are reflections of *subjectivity* in our everyday use of language” (Thompson and Hopper 2001: 53; italics original). The extent to which changes in transitivity relates to subjectification remains to be determined, except in the domain of the development of raising constructions (Langacker 1995).

Yet another likely locus is semantic polarity sensitivity. However, the particular change in question may show different specific correlations. While the counter-expectation of *salirse* may be unlikely to arise in negative environments, expressions that evaluate small degree as below the norm or less than adequate may favor negative polarity (*a bit*, *a shred of*). Relevant polarity sensitivity is not only clause- but also phrase-internal. As we have seen, in the case of (*not*) *a shred of* the head is almost exclusively positively evaluated (*honor*, *dignity*, *evidence*) (phrase-internal polarity). Hoeksema (1996-1997) has shown that during the twentieth century a division of labor has developed between two Dutch degree adverbs, *bar* and *bijster*, both meaning ‘very, all that’. *Bar* has come to be favored in positive clauses but with negative members of an antonym pair (e.g. ‘bad’), while *bijster* has come to be favored in negative sentences with positive members of an antonym pair (e.g. ‘good, uninspired’):

- (29) a. Real Madrid was niet *bijster* geïnspireerd tegen Albacete.  
 Real Madrid was not terribly inspired against Albacete  
 b. Werpers zijn hard nodig bij de *bar* slecht spelende Giants.  
 Pitchers are badly needed with the very badly playing Giants

The evaluations emerging from such distributional shifts strongly point to the importance of investigating polarity as a context for subjectification, but do not seem to be generalizable beyond the particular examples.

To my knowledge, there have not been attempts to operationalize intersubjectification. Here again there is a need to distinguish the context of 2<sup>nd</sup> person subjects (addressees) from intersubjectivity that is relevant to intersubjectification. While *you see* and *y’know*, with their routinized 2<sup>nd</sup> person subjects, might appear to be markers of intersubjectivity (example (19e) is a case in point), they are actually often used for subjective purposes, to negotiate speaker meaning, as in the case of subjectified *a bit of*. Even imperative utterances, which are clearly in themselves initially intersubjective, may be subjectified. Examples include the development of hortative *let’s* (as in *Let’s go*, *shall*

we?) from (you) *let us X*, (as in *Let us go, will you?*) (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 176-178), and of discourse marker *say* in many of its meanings ('assume, about, for example, tell me'). *Say* derives from an intersubjective, imperative use, but is subjectified over time, e.g. the 'about' use is a type of topicalizer, and the 'tell me' use expresses speaker's impatience (Brinton 2005).

One context that is useful to track in the search for structural correlates of (inter)subjectification is changing position in the phrase or clause. In her study of tense, aspect and mood, Bybee (1985) showed that mood (defined as epistemic modality) typically occurs on the periphery of the verbal complex (Bybee 1985: 34-35, 196-200). She correlated this position with degree of relevance to the verb (mood has sentential scope, and therefore is less relevant to the verb than tense and aspect). Mood is typically grammaticalized from a variety of sources (see Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994: 240-241 for one proposal), and subjectified. A growing number of studies have suggested that as they are subjectified linguistic elements are used in increasingly peripheral positions. Typically the shift is leftward in VO languages, and rightward in OV languages. In English many discourse markers are associated with left (sometime right) periphery, and their use in this position can be correlated with subjectification of their meaning (see e.g. Traugott and Dasher 2002 on *indeed, in fact, actually*, Brinton Forthcoming on *I mean*). It has further been suggested that subjectified meanings of adjectives are to be found in the left periphery of the NP, see e.g. Adamson (2000) on the development from descriptive to affective meanings of *lovely* as in *a lovely little example*, and Breban (2006) on the word order correlations of subjectification and grammaticalization in the development of adjectives like *different, distinct*.<sup>xxviii</sup> Likewise, in Japanese many items that are subjectified or intersubjectified come to be used on the periphery of the clause (see e.g. Onodera 2005, Onodera and Suzuki Forthcoming). To what extent there are cross-constructional and cross-linguistic constraints on the leftward (or rightward) shift over time of expressions that undergo (inter)subjectification remains to be determined (Traugott Forthcoming a).

## 7. Conclusion

I have hypothesized that subjectification and intersubjectification involve the reanalysis as coded meanings of pragmatic meanings arising in the context of speaker-hearer negotiation of meaning. Subjectification is the development of meanings that express speaker attitude or viewpoint, while intersubjectification is the development of the speaker's attention to addressee self-image. This requires rethinking Halliday and Hasan's "interpersonal" meanings as having dual functions: subjective and oriented toward the speaker, and intersubjective, oriented toward the addressee. It also requires more careful distinction than I have previously made between increases in pragmatic (inter)subjective invited inferences in specific contexts and the semanticization of these invited inferences.

I have argued that subjectification and intersubjectification are independent of grammaticalization. However, since grammaticalization involves the development of markers of speaker attitude toward the ideational component and toward textual connectivity (among many other things), there is inevitably a close interaction between grammaticalization and subjectification. The intersection of grammaticalization and intersubjectification is less common, since the latter largely involves expressions of politeness, and cross-linguistically these tend to be associated with lexical choices rather than with grammatical ones.

Attempts to identify evidence for the structural contexts of subjectification have confirmed how extensive its reach can be. However, it appears that each construction needs to be studied in its own terms before any cross-constructional let alone cross-linguistic predictions can be made about which contexts are the most likely to enable subjectification to occur. A fuller understanding of contexts for subjectification will presumably arise eventually from studies of the collocations not only within local constructions (“collostructions”, see Gries and Stefanowitsch 2004), but also across a large number of distributional contexts in a large number of languages over time (see Hilpert, In progress).<sup>xxix</sup>

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## NOTES

<sup>i</sup> Many thanks to Brian J. Joseph and to an anonymous reviewer for valuable comments and suggestions. Any remaining errors or failures to solve the intersubjective problem of being clear and informative are of course my own responsibility.

<sup>iii</sup> De Smet and Verstraete (2006: 369) usefully contrast Langacker’s perspective on subjectification: “In Langacker’s terms, the difference is not whether something is speaker-related or not, but how explicitly reference to the speaker figures in the form of the utterance”.

<sup>iv</sup> Because I make this distinction between pragmatics and semantics, my purposes do not and have not coincided with those of cognitive grammar, although there are obvious points of contact (see discussion in Athanasiadou, Canakis, and Cornillie 2006, and Brisard 2006).

<sup>vi</sup> For studies of these and other binominal NP of NP phrases in the context of grammaticalization theory and construction grammar, see also Traugott 2006, Forthcoming b, c).

<sup>vii</sup> I use the term “inventory” in preference to “lexicon”, since the latter invokes only lexical items, while “inventory” is a neutral term covering lexical and grammatical items (Brinton and Traugott 2005: 90).

<sup>viii</sup> Speakers/writers may of course evoke unintentionally (Keller 1994), and addressees/readers may fail to make the inference (or the appropriate inference).

<sup>ix</sup> Athanasiadou, Canakis, and Cornillie (2006) construe my view of subjectification as primarily pragmatic; while pragmatic strengthening of subjective meanings is without question a pre-condition for subjectification, subjectification itself is not pragmaticalization, but semanticization (on the assumption that there is a difference between pragmatics and semantics).

<sup>x</sup> For a modified hypothesis about this change, see Garrett (Forthcoming). Thanks to Brian D. Joseph for this reference.

<sup>xi</sup> This example, like many others of the time is potentially ambiguous,, but the “exit” context suggests it is intended as a motion verb.

<sup>xii</sup> Note interlocutors have an argument structure role in referent honorific (T/V) systems, including European ones.

<sup>xiii</sup> For discussion of how to assess “less” and “more” grammatical, see Brinton and Traugott (2005: 93, 147-150).

<sup>xiv</sup> For the distinctions see Brinton and Traugott (2005: 144-145). Briefly, grammaticalization involves the development of items expressing grammatical function, whereas lexicalization involves the development of items with contentful meaning.

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- <sup>xv</sup> De Smet and Verstraete (2006), which appeared too late to be fully incorporated into discussion, seek to distinguish degrees of subjectivity using syntactic criteria; to what extent these criteria can be identified with grammaticalization remains to be investigated.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Cornillie's statement that "The combined process of grammaticalization and pragmatic strengthening crucially involves a shift toward linguistic expressions that carry a more speaker-based view. More particularly it entails subjectification" (Cornillie 2004: 52) is too strong. There is a correlation, not an entailment relationship.
- <sup>xvii</sup> For example, Aijmer (1997) argues for the term "pragmaticalization" rather than "grammaticalization" for items that expand their scope such as discourse markers.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Given the example in (6), the anonymous reviewer raised the question whether intersubjectification may not correlate with secondary grammaticalization. This is a research questions that needs further study.
- <sup>xix</sup> Denison (2002) calls Degree Modifiers with the first three properties PreDeterminers; Aarts (2001) calls them Complex Specifiers.
- <sup>xx</sup> This was used of men and women, presumably somewhat derogatorily.
- <sup>xxi</sup> While the extensions Himmelmann identifies may be true of primary grammaticalization, there is often later restriction syntactically: a grammaticalized element may become fixed to just one context; or lose most meaning (typical of inflections); or, as a grammaticalized item comes to be obsolescent, it may become more and more frozen, as is the now long non-productive Demonstrative + Instrumental case *ly* which is restricted to *the X-er the Y-er* constructions such as *The more the merrier*.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Further evidence for the low degree of grammaticalization of *a shred of* is its low frequency: 4 hits in LION, English Prose Drama, 32 in UVA, as opposed to 623 and 1702 respectively for *a bit of* (in all its uses). The numbers no doubt in part reflect the fact that the Degree Modifier use of *a shred* developed a hundred years later than that of *a bit*, but this alone hardly accounts for the dramatic differences in numbers between *a shred of* and *a bit of*.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> They also cite an external mechanism, borrowing, but that does not concern us here.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> "Introduces categories which previously had no linguistic expression, transforms the totality of the system".
- <sup>xxv</sup> See also e.g. Himmelmann (2004), Traugott (2006), Fischer (2007).
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Similarly, although frequency is often construed as a factor contributing to "the mechanisms of change associated with grammaticalization" (Bybee 2003:602), it is not a cause.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> How the relative sizes of *bit*, *piece*, *iota*, *shred*, *bunch*, *lot*, etc. can be established is hard to determine in historical data.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Breban (2006) relates the leftward shift of evaluating adjectives to the intersection of three things: i) the constructional properties of NPs in English, in which the rightward elements have descriptively specific semantics, while the leftward ones denote quantity and grounding (Langacker 1991), ii) grammaticalization, iii) subjectification.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Such studies will presumably also test to what extent the Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change (Traugott and Dasher 2002) is correct that utterance-token meanings (particularized implicatures or PCI's) precede the general acceptance of utterance-type meanings that develop out of them (generalized implicatures or GCI's). In their critique of this hypothesis, Hansen and Waltereit (2006) focus not so much on the token (PCI) vs. type (GCI) distinction, but on a distinction between foregrounding (PCI) vs. backgrounding (GCI).

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MED *The Middle English Dictionary*. 1956-2001. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.  
(see also <http://www.hti.umich.edu/dict/med/>)  
OED *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (in progress). <http://dictionary.oed.com/>  
UVa University of Virginia, Electronic Text Center, Modern English Collection.  
<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/modeng/modeng0.browse.html>

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