

A typology of cyclicity

Waves and spirals, constructions and features

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12.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the concept of cyclicity in language change, proposing a definition based on a typology of cycles. This typology results from intersecting two fundamental distinctions: waves or spirals of change, namely recurrence of a cline or back-and-forth trajectories on a cline; and constructionalization or constructional shifts—that is, change involving the rise of new constructions or affecting specific features.

Since seminal works on cycles of pragmaticalization (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a; Hansen 2014), the concept of cyclicity has been researched—beyond the level of morphosyntax (van Gelderen 2011, 2023; Bouzouita et al. 2019)—with particular reference to pragmatic aspects of language (Hansen 2018a, 2020b). This study attempts to systematize differences in approaching cyclicity mainly at the level of semantic-pragmatic change, first discussing foundational issues about cycles (Section 12.2), adding new empirical data (Section 12.3), and finally taking up the framework of Diachronic Construction Grammar (Section 12.4).

In Section 12.2, elaborating on previous theoretical reflection (Scivoletto 2020), the first distinction of types of cyclicity is discussed. Recurrence of a given evolution or cline—illustrated by the metaphor of waves—is contrasted with back-and-forth change alongside a particular dimension—depicted by the metaphor of spirals. While most studies have focused on recurrence, the case of Sicilian *mentri* (Scivoletto 2020) is a good example of back-and-forth change in a semasiological perspective,¹ with reference to its functional development into the discourse-pragmatic level.

¹ The distinction between semasiological and onomasiological cycles is defined by Hansen (2018a: 56, 64) as follows: ‘if one and the same form, or several etymologically closely related forms, repeatedly develop(s) similar context-level functions from a similar point of departure at the content level ... we are dealing with semasiological cyclicity’, whereas onomasiological cyclicity is found ‘if we observe that a similar context-level meaning/function or set of meanings/functions is renewed several times by etymologically unrelated forms with similar content-level source meanings’.

In Section 12.3, expanding the empirical data under examination, spiral-like cyclicity is discussed further. While the cycle of *mentri* has been examined as change revolving around a semantic dimension (contrast), the case of *bi* involves scope change, a feature that intersects meaning and form. The Sicilian form undergoes a back-and-forth trajectory along a generally recognized tendency in the evolution of discourse markers (DMs); that is, scope increase: as *bi* evolves at the discourse-pragmatic level, its scope expands at first, but it gets reduced in the latest stage of the diachronic thread. This empirical finding highlights the role of particular dimensions, or features, in detecting cycles.

As cycles can involve either the creation of new constructions or shifts in single features, a new distinction emerges if we take up the framework of Diachronic Construction Grammar: cyclicity can be observed in terms of constructionalization or constructional shifts (cf. discussion in Section 12.4.1). Intersecting this latter distinction with the former, a typology of four conceptions of cycles results. Cyclicity can be seen either as recurrence or back-and-forth change on the one hand, and as constructionalization or constructional shift on the other. In Section 12.4, this typology is discussed, drawing on the recent research on cyclicity.

12.2 Types of cyclicity: spirals and waves

This study argues that cycles stand for continuous linguistic change involving a back-and-forth evolution with respect to a particular dimension, and they can be metaphorically intended as spirals.² Although cyclicity was first envisioned in modern linguistics by means of this metaphor, conceptions have developed in a different perspective, which involves the re-instantiation of a given change, and which is depicted by the metaphor of waves. This section briefly traces this history and distinction, and it eventually recalls the case of *mentri* (Scivoletto 2020) that shows an instance of back-and-forth, spiral-like, cyclicity.

12.2.1 Cycles, spirals, waves

While the concept of linguistic cycles can be traced back to scholars such as Condillac, Bopp, and Humboldt (van Gelderen 2011: 3), the foundations of present-day research are the works by von der Gabelentz, Meillet, and Jespersen. Von der Gabelentz (2015 [1891]: 268–271) first proposed the image of the spiral to represent the change whereby languages alternate—that is, cyclic change—synthetic and analytical patterns. Later, the spiral is referred to by Meillet (1921

² This discussion of cycles in terms of spirals and waves, already formulated in Scivoletto (2020), is consistent with similar reflections offered by Pons and Llopis (2020).

[1912]: 140–141), in his pioneering understanding of the evolution of lexical items into grammatical forms: linguistic forms evolve in a cyclic fashion, in that once a lexical item has undergone a particular diachronic path, new items may tread the same path once again. A renowned example is the so-called Jespersen Cycle (Jespersen 1917) affecting negation and first studied in the history of French: the preverbal negation inherited from Latin (preverbal *ne*) weakens and is reinforced by an additional word or minimizer (bipartite *ne pas*), which later becomes the only negative device functioning in postverbal position (postverbal *pas*), and might eventually re-instantiate the process (preverbal *pas*) over again (cf. Hansen 2009). These three foundational works take into consideration different linguistic structures, and they correspond to the types distinguished by Heine et al. (1991: 245): isolated instances of grammaticalization (Meillet), subparts of a language (Jespersen), or entire languages and language types (von der Gabelentz).

A fundamental difference among these approaches concerns continuous versus discontinuous change. In anasynthetic spirals (the alternation of synthetic and analytical patterns in the history of languages; cf. Szmrecsanyi 2016; Haspelmath 2018) and negative cycles, language change is observed as a continuous phenomenon, affecting language type and negation respectively. For instance, in the Jespersen Cycle, French negation evolves uninterruptedly from preverbal *ne* to postverbal *pas*. One can see a spiral with respect to a particular dimension (i.e. single or double negation): in the overall evolution, the language is moving—metaphorically speaking—from single to double negation and back to (new) single negation. The latest stage resembles the oldest, but they are not identical (preverbal *ne* vs. postverbal *pas*): the image of this change is a spiral rather than a full circle. In this perspective, a cycle might be detected by studying the evolution of one single structure or one single language.

A different conception, dating back to von der Gabelentz³ and Meillet,⁴ considers discontinuous change: put simplistically, once an item has gone through a given kind of grammatical evolution, other forms will follow. This view of cycles entails recurrence, in that more than one diachronic thread must be taken into account at the same time. The discontinuous approach was elaborated in terms of ‘cyclic waves’ by Givón (1979b: 209, original emphasis). Crosslinguistically, discourse structures undergo syntacticization, and they erode into morphological markers, later into morphophonemic items, and eventually fade out altogether: discourse > syntax > morphology > morphophonemics > zero. Such a tendency is

³ Cf. von der Gabelentz (2015 [1891]: 253; my translation): ‘What was once new and rare becomes common, and so it loses its strength, fades It’s like in public service: one gets hired, promoted, put on half-pay, and eventually retires altogether; and outside the gates, a crowd of applicants is waiting.’

⁴ Cf. Meillet (1921 [1912]: 140–141, my translation): ‘Languages follow a kind of spiral development; they add accessory words to achieve an intense expression; these words weaken, degrade, and fall at the level of grammatical tools; new words or different words are added for expressivity; the weakening begins again, and so on, endlessly.’

at the heart of research on grammaticalization, which shows the following cline: content item > grammatical word > clitic > inflectional affix > zero (cf. Hopper and Traugott 2003: 7; Narrog and Heine 2021: 130). Considering the case of French negation, the discontinuous approach would account for the development of the specific items that constitute the structure (*ne* and *pas*). In other words, specific negative particles can undergo syntacticization and erosion. Yet, the overall construction can be understood in the continuous approach, in terms of a cycle from single to double marking (and possibly to single, once again). What might be labelled wave-cyclicity corresponds also to the perspective of van Gelderen (2011, 2023), who has extensively researched linguistic cycles: cyclicity always involves phonological weakening and loss.⁵ Well-established lines of research—both in functional (cf. Givón 2018b) and formal (van Gelderen 2011, 2023) approaches—share the core idea of discontinuous change: cycles are detected across separate diachronic threads; that is, changes that recur in more than one construction or one language.

12.2.2 Wave-cyclicity

Since the first studies (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a; Hansen 2014; cf. also the *avant la lettre* study by Cuenca 1992–1993), cycles of pragmaticalization have been conceptualized as discontinuous change; that is, recurrence of a given trajectory among different linguistic items.

According to Hansen (2014: 164), these cycles are found ‘when the content-level source item of a context-level (i.e. pragmatic) marker is replaced, then the new item is likely eventually to become the source of context-level functions similar to those of the item it replaced’. This is the case with Latin *IAM*, Medieval French *ja*, and Modern French *déjà*: the three parallel forms evolve from temporal/aspectual ones, and they develop ‘discourse-oriented senses which, although not identical, are in several cases reminiscent of one another’ (Hansen 2014: 164). Recurrence is also key in the definition by Molinelli (2014: 269), according to whom cycles of pragmaticalization are ‘frequent, productive, and iterative processes through which lexical elements, which have acquired a pragmatic function, are gradually replaced by different source lexemes, which progressively take over the functions originally performed by the replaced forms’. Such a process is exemplified by the evolution of politeness markers in Latin and Italian. In the two languages, independently, a pair of verbs meaning ‘I ask’—Latin *QUAERO* (later pragmaticalized as *QUAESO*) and Italian *chiedo*—and ‘I pray’—*ROGO* and *prego*—display the same

⁵ Cf. van Gelderen (2016a: 3): ‘cycles involve the disappearance of a particular word and its renewal by another’. In revising her definition, the core notion of ‘phonological loss’ is maintained, either as a driving force in itself or as a later outcome of earlier pragmatic strengthening (van Gelderen 2023: 6).

semantic-pragmatic trajectory towards politeness marking. The change affecting Italian parallels the one involving Latin, but with some difference: the most pragmaticalized item is the one originating from ‘I pray’ in Italian, (*prego*) and the one originating from ‘I ask’ in Latin (*QUAESO*).

What is peculiar about cycles of pragmaticalization—in contrast to morphosyntactic ones—is that recurrence yields an outcome that resembles its predecessor rather than being identical to it.⁶ In this sense, authors have returned to the metaphor of the spiral: ‘the evolutions in question are in several cases ultimately more like spirals than cycles in the strict sense’, as ‘semantic/pragmatic renewal results in patterns of usage which are similar, but not identical, to those of the items that are being renewed’ (Hansen 2018a: 70; cf. also Ghezzi and Molinelli 2020: 231).

The use of this metaphor and the one proposed in this study (and already Scivoleto 2020) differ significantly. Describing cycles of pragmaticalization, the spiral is opposed to the circle: change does not recur in an identical manner, so the cycle is not a proper circle, but a spiral (cf. Hansen 2018b: 143). To my understanding, the spiral here only serves to symbolize the imperfect nature of recurrence. On a more general level, these studies still represent cases of wave-cyclicity: quasi-identical changes recur along a given diachronic trajectory, just like waves follow and resemble one other along with the tide:

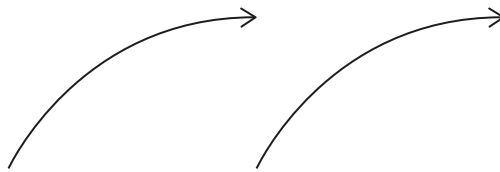


Figure 12.1 Cycles as waves

In Figure 12.1, the arrows represent a cline that is repeated; that is, a diachronic thread that re-instantiates and resembles its antecedent. After a first thread has unrolled (first arrow), a parallel one follows (second arrow). Two distinct arrows indicate that wave-cyclicity is a discontinuous change.

In a different sense, the image of spirals can be used not in contrast to full circles but rather to waves. As Figure 12.2 shows, a spiral represents a back-and-forth trajectory with reference to a particular dimension.

⁶ This difference might be due to different levels of abstraction usually assumed. On the one hand, morphosyntactic cycles are observed according to very general formal features of a construction, mainly its syntactic function (e.g. demonstrative > copula > zero, in *Copula Cycles*, or demonstrative > article, in *Determiner Cycles*; cf. van Gelderen 2023). On the other hand, cycles of pragmaticalization have been studied delving into semantic-pragmatic change, fine-tuning specific trajectories. The distinction might be captured by the notions of macropaths and micropaths (Hansen, this volume).

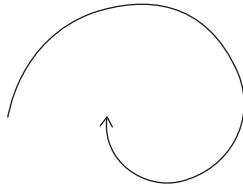


Figure 12.2 Cycles as spirals.

In Figure 12.2, the arrow represents a single line of continuous change. Its movement can be seen with respect to a bottom line, representing a particular dimension of analysis, which has two endpoints. A spiral is traced when change is metaphorically mapped onto this dimension: it proceeds in one direction (from one endpoint to the other) but eventually turns back, going in the opposite direction.

These metaphors are used to portray two distinct ways to look at change. Cyclicity is depicted either by waves, if it is conceived as (discontinuous) recurrence of a cline, or by spirals, if it is regarded as (continuous) back-and-forth development along a cline. The latter case has been exemplified by Sicilian *mentri* (Scivoletto 2020), as summarized in Section 12.2.3.

12.2.3 Spiral-cyclicity

In contrast to wave-cyclicity, the evolution of *mentri* as a DM in Sicilian is a case of spiral-cyclicity. Summing up the analysis in Scivoletto (2020, 2022a), the original conjunction stems from Latin *DŪM INTĒRIM*, with a temporal meaning of simultaneity (Stage I: ‘while, in the meantime’), which gives rise to an adversative meaning (Stage II: ‘whereas’). This development from time to contrast is brought about by a context-induced reinterpretation: when the two elements linked by the conjunction correspond to an antonymic state-of-affairs, the linking item is reanalysed as marking precisely this opposition (cf. the theoretical account provided by Mauri and Giacalone Ramat 2012: 218–229). This evolution is very common crosslinguistically, as it is attested in Romance co-etymological forms (It. *mentre*, Sp. *mientras*, and so on) and Eng. *while*, and it is not limited to Indo-European languages (cf. Heine and Kuteva 2002: 291–293).

Peculiar to Sicilian and in contrast to its Romance cognates, the word for ‘while’ evolves its adversative function further, namely from opposition to counterexpectation. *Mentri* can mark not only an opposition between two propositions, but it extends to mark the contrast between one’s own utterance and some expectation that derives from the context of discourse (Stage III: ‘however, though’). Consider,

for instance, a conversation happening in a café (Scivoletto 2022a: 69): a man finds out that another man has already graduated (that is, earlier than he expects) and utters *mentri giovane* ('young, though!').

Finally, counterexpectation is exploited as a rhetorical strategy, which is used by speakers to mark their conversational moves as salient in the ongoing discourse (Traugott 1999). Rhetorically exploited, no actual contrast is expressed. Discourse marking uses emerge instead, both as a textual function of cohesion (Stage IVa: 'by the way') and as an interpersonal function of positive appraisal (Stage IVb: 'not bad!'), and the form co-occurs (or merges) with the emphatic particle *a* (*a mentri* or *amentri*). In the first case, *mentri* marks cohesion with preceding discourse, either shifting or expanding a topic. For example, in a family discussion (Scivoletto 2022a: 72) an elderly woman says that she owes some money to her daughter for buying some diapers; the daughter expands the topic, from the price to the quality of the object, and so she asks *mentri comu fuoru* ('by the way, how were they?'). In the second case, by means of *amentri* a speaker can mark a positive evaluation about the context of discourse or situation. In a post on social media (Scivoletto 2022a: 76), a man writes *a mentriiii* (without univertation) to comment on a picture of a friend who is having a good time in a pub, in order to express appreciation ('not bad!').

In its overall diachrony, *mentri* has first developed a contrast value, which then expands and finally fades out in the discourse marking uses. If we consider the adversative function, *mentri* has evolved back and forth: it has first developed and then lost it. With respect to this function as a dimension for change, a continuous spiral-like trajectory emerges (Figure 12.3).

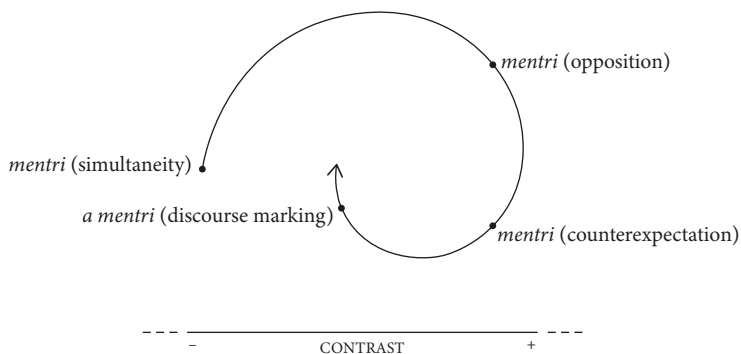


Figure 12.3 Spiral-cyclicity in the evolution of Sicilian *mentri*

As Figure 12.3 shows, spiral-cyclicity needs a particular dimension, according to which a back-and-forth movement can be identified. In the case of *mentri*, this dimension is the development of the contrast function. In this sense, this evolution has been first presented in terms of semasiological cyclicity (Scivoletto

2020): a cycle is detected by focusing on meaning change, and not on the form itself. In other words, in the overall evolution of the lexical item (a form-function association, whose elements both undergo change), cyclicity involves mainly its functional development.

Beyond the semasiological/onomasiological distinction, the evolution of DMs in Sicilian offers another piece of evidence for detecting back-and-forth movement in semantic-pragmatic change. The following section (Section 12.3) presents the diachrony of *bì*, as a case of spiral-cyclicity. These empirical findings allow for elaborating on the issue of dimensions and features in the analysis of cycles (Section 12.4).

12.3 Cyclicity in scope change: the evolution of *bì* as a discourse marker in Sicilian

This section takes into account the evolution of *bì* as a DM.⁷ This is shown to be a case for of back-and-forth movement which is not limited to meaning change. The specific dimension along which a cycle is detected is scope change. Sicilian *bì* shows that scope expansion takes place at first, as happens in the evolution of DMs, but it is followed by scope reduction eventually. In this sense, with reference to the dimension of scope, the DM develops a cyclic path.

As to methodology, this study is based on a broader study of DMs in Sicilian (Scivoletto 2022a). Present-day data come from recordings of spontaneous informal speech (around 30 hours of talk, involving around 70 speakers), plus a sample of computer-mediated communication collected on social media. Historical data are drawn from *ARTESIA* (a corpus of 1.3 million tokens from 746 texts), for Old Sicilian (14th–16th centuries), and from an original collection of texts—including dictionaries, ancient grammars, collections of songs and folk tales, poetry, and drama (cf. Scivoletto 2022a: 183–185)—for Modern Sicilian (17th–20th centuries).

12.3.1 Present-day uses of *bì*

In a synchronic perspective, today *bì* displays two kinds of function—both interpersonal and textual, as is typical of DMs: on the one hand, it expresses the surprise of the speaker in reaction to a given context, namely as a mirative marker (cf. Aikhenvald 2012); on the other hand, it marks self-correction; that is, it signals

⁷ The DM was first discussed with reference to the marking of mirativity in Sicilian (Scivoletto 2025), and its evolution is examined in the framework of intersubjectification (Scivoletto forthcoming).

a *lapsus linguae* on the part of the speaker that requires rectification (cf. Gülich and Kotschi 1995).

While the former function is attested by lexicography, the latter has been detected only in recordings of spontaneous informal speech. In the main lexicographical source for Sicilian, *Vocabolario Siciliano* (VS: s.v. *bbi!*), the form is treated as an interjection, and it is defined as an ‘exclamation of surprise or wonder’. In fact, surprise is often exploited to perform appreciation (‘wonder’) on a pragmatic level (e.g. Eng. *wow*):

(1)⁸ CHATTING ABOUT CHRISTMAS

A: *c'è il bambino piccolo, P, che ha fatto i disegni per tutt+ per tutti gli zii*
c'è il bambin-o piccol-o, P, che
 LOC=be.PRS.3G ART.DEF.M.SG child-M.SG little-M.SG PN REL
ha fatto i disegn-i per tutt-
 AUX.PRS.3SG do.PTCP ART.DEF.M.PL drawing-PL for all
per tutt-i gli zi-i
 for all-M.PL ART.DEF.M.PL uncle-M.PL
 ‘there is the little kid, P, who made some drawings for all the aunts and uncles’

B: *bì::*
 DM
 ‘Oooh!’

C: *simpatico P!*
 simpatic-o P.
 nice-M.SG PN
 ‘P. is so nice!’

In (1), speaker A is talking about a child who made some drawings for Christmas gifts. Speakers B and C both react surprised, to express their appreciation: B by means of a dedicated mirative DM, and C with an explicit remark.⁹ When surprise and appraisal combine, *bi* displays a number of formal variants—*pi*, *mbi*, *mbè*—often attested on social media:

⁸ Speech is transcribed with a mixed orthographic-conversational system (cf. Scivoletto 2022a: 186–187). Relevant to the examples in this chapter, note that: italic and regular fonts indicate the two codes in bilingual discourse, respectively Sicilian and Italian; parts in Italian are rendered following standard orthography. The symbol ‘˘’ indicates lengthening, ‘=’ latching, ‘/’ pauses, ‘+’ self-interruption, and ‘|’ a change in discourse planning, and punctuation renders basic intonations. Computer-mediated communication data are reported exactly as they were originally typed. In historical data, ‘/’ stands for the end of a line.

⁹ In the utterance by speaker C, surprise is implied through the mirative strategy of focus fronting (Cruschina and Bianchi 2021).

(2) COMMENTS ON THREE FACEBOOK POSTS

- a. Pi ppi ppi ppi ppiii (Scritto non rende. L'audio richiedilo su Whatsapp)
 pì, pì, pì (Scritt-o non rende. L=audio
 DM written-M.SG NEG render.PRS.3SG ART.DEF.M.SG=audio
 richiedi-lo su WhatsApp)
 ask.IMP.2SG-OBJ.M.SG on WhatsApp
 'Oh! (Typed text doesn't work. Ask for the voice message on WhatsApp)'
- b. Mbiiiiiii chi priuuuu
 mbì chi pri-u
 DM COMP joy-M.SG
 'Oh, what a joy!'
- c. mbe mbe mbe!!!!a mancàutu tu
 mbè, mbè, mbè a mancàutu tu
 DM EMPH miss.PST.IPFV.2SG you
 'Oh, all we needed was you!'

In (2) three independent comments are compared, which react to pictures posted on Facebook by three different young women. In all three, variants of *bì* convey surprise to express appreciation ('wow') about the beauty of the friend in the picture. Formally, the DM shows graphic rendering of phonetic change: devoicing of the bilabial stop (*pì*, 2a) and its dissimilation (*mbì*, 2b), which can be accompanied by lowering of the vowel (*mbè*, 2c).

However, surprise is not necessarily associated with a positive evaluation. The data allow us to distinguish a proper mirative meaning (surprise) from pragmatic evaluation (positive appraisal):

(3) FAMILY CHATTING

A: (sneezes three times)

B: *bì*!

DM

'oh!'

C: *ti stai arrufriddannu. ma nunn-ò viri ch'è picciùttu!* (laughs)

ti=stai arrufriddannu. ma nunn=ò
 2SG.OBL=AUX.PRS.2SG get_a_cold.PROG but NEG-OBJ.M.SG

virì ch=è picciùtt-u
 see.PRS.2SG COMP=be.PRS.3SG youth-M.SG

'you are getting a cold. Well, don't you see, he's young!'

In (3), after speaker A sneezes, speaker B utters *bì* to express her surprise, and speaker C makes a sarcastic comment. Speaker B is just surprised about speaker

A (her brother) getting a cold: the DM performs a mirative meaning, but no positive pragmatic evaluation.

In addition to mirativity, *bì* serves the textual function of correction:

(4) FAMILY CHATTING

A: *a mia u psicolugu, bì u psicolugu, u dietolugu mi rissi [...]*
a mia u psicolugu, bì u
 to OBL.1SG ART.DEF.M.SG psychologist, DM ART.DEF.M.SG
psicolugu, u dietolugu mi=rissi
 psychologist, ART.DEF.M.SG dietician OBL.1SG=tell.PST.3SG
 ‘my psychologist, oh not my psychologist, my dietician told me’

Regardless of the wider context, in (4) *bì* serves to correct a mistake in talk. The speaker invalidates something she has just said, by resuming and marking it (*bì u psicolugu*, ‘oh not my psychologist’), and so allowing for rectification (*u dietolugu mi rissi...*, ‘my dietician told me...’).

In a diachronic perspective, correction is an outcome of mirative uses, as the reconstruction of the evolution of *bì* in the next subsection shows.

12.3.2 The discourse-pragmatic evolution of *bì*

Sicilian *bì* stems from the imperative of ‘to see’ (2SG), *vidi*, and develops discourse-pragmatic uses already in Old Sicilian:

(5) *DIALAGU DE SANCTU GREGORIU* (1315; in *ARTESIA*)

Vidi, Petru, de quanta sanctitati fu kyllu episcupu, ky standu et sedendu pocti astutarj lu focu per sua sanctitati, sencza ayutu humanu

Vidi, Petru, de quant-a sanctitat-i fu
 see.IMP PN of how_much-F.SG holiness-F.SG be.PST.3SG
 kyll-u episcup-u, ky standu et sedendu pocti
 DEM-M.SG bishop-M.SG COMP stay.IPFV and sit.IPFV can.PST.3SG
 astutarj l-u foc-u per su-a sanctitat-i,
 put_out.INF ART.DEF-M.SG fire-M.SG with POSS.3-F.SG holiness-F.SG
 sencza ayut-u human-u
 without help-M.SG human-M.SG

‘See, Petru, of how much holiness was that bishop, who by just staying and sitting could put out the fire by means of his sanctity’

Example (5) shows that, already at the beginning of the 14th century, *vidi* does not convey visual perception, and it is rather used to draw the attention of the reader,

in a rhetoric and persuasive manner. The function of attention-getting (cf. Fagard 2010) conventionalizes during the 16th century:

- (6) POEM BY T. BONFARE (D.1609; IN GALEANO 1645: 321)

Vì, chi cui vinci primu perdi poi

Vì,	chi	cui	vinci	primu	perdi	poi
DM,	COMP	who	win.PRS.3SG	first	lose.PRS.3SG	then

‘See, that who wins at first will lose in the end.’

In (6), *vidi* is reduced to the first syllable, and the resulting monosyllable, *vì*, carries a graphic accent. On the functional side, a reading of *vì* as a perception verb is impossible: ‘who wins at first will lose in the end’ is something to consider or to acknowledge rather than to see. The discourse marker is in the process of developing a mirative meaning, as a bridging context shows:

- (7) POEM BY V. GANGI (D.1816, IN DI MARIA 1978: 62)

Dd’ucchiuzzi ca lucenu / Vih vih chi cosa rara!

Dd=ucchi-uzz-i	ca	lucenu
DEM=eyes-DIM-PL	REL	shine.PRS.3PL

Vih, vih	chi	cos-a	rar-a
DM	COMP	thing-F.SG	rare-F.SG

‘Those little eyes that shine / Oh, oh, how rare a thing!’

In (7), the form appears with a final grapheme, <h>, that is used in Italo-Romance varieties for monosyllabic secondary interjections (e.g. present-day Italian *beh*, from *bene* ‘well’, and *mah*, from *ma* ‘but’). Also typical of interjections or DMs, *vih* in (7) shows repetition. By the 18th century, a DM has emerged (*vih*), formally distinguished from its lexical source, the imperative of ‘to see’ (*vidi*). Functionally, a crucial semantic-pragmatic change is occurring: *vih* not only draws the attention of the listener/reader but also expresses the attitude of the speaker/writer. The attitude is precisely a mix of surprise and positive evaluation. In this sense, in (7) a bridging context is shown between attention-getting and mirativity. One century later, the mirative meaning appears, detached from pragmatic appraisal:

- (8) FOLK TALE (GUASTELLA 1882: 50)

Saluti vi ‘uòggiu, gnu massaru... Bih, comu siti sculanti! assittàtivi ô luci

Saluti	vi	‘uòggiu,	gn-u	massar-u...	Bih,	comu
health	OBL.2PL	want.PRS.1SG	Mr.-M	farmer-M.SG	DM	how

siti	sculanti!	assittàtivi	ô	luci
be.PRS.2PL	drenched	sit.IMP.2PL	by.DEF.M.SG	fire

‘Greetings to you, Mr. farmer. Oh, how drenched you are! Sit by the fire’

In (8), a woman welcomes a man: she notices that he is soaking wet, so she expresses her surprise (*Bih, comu siti sculanti!* ‘Oh, how drenched you are!’) and offers him a seat by the fireplace. The woman is not appreciating the fact that the man is drenched, of course: mirativity does not entail any positive evaluation. As to the form, betacism led *vih* into *bih*, just like *bì* in present-day speech.

While mirative uses are widespread in the 19th century, correction has no attestations in the historical data. Correction can be understood as a later function, not only due to negative chronological evidence but also by means of internal semantic reconstruction: it results as a specialized outcome of mirativity. Mirative *bì* functions as a change-of-state token (Heritage 1984): something unexpected has just happened, so the speaker expresses their surprise. In fact, correction can be seen as a specific use of surprise, which is performed in reaction to a change-of-state that concerns the text rather than factual events. In other words: the speaker expresses a surprised reaction with respect to a mistake that has just occurred in speech, so as to signal the mistake and to allow for self-rectification.

The overall evolution of *bì* as a DM is schematized in Table 12.1.

Table 12.1 The evolution of *bì*^a

Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Stage IV
<i>vidi</i>	<i>vi</i>	<i>vih, bih</i> (> <i>pì, mbì, mbè</i>)	[bɪ]
imperative V	> attention-getting DM	> mirative DM	> corrective DM

^a ‘V’ stands for ‘verb’ and ‘DM’ for ‘discourse marker’; in Stage III, *bì* is represented through phonetic transcription (as well as in Figure 12.4), precisely due to its absence in historical written data.

In Table 12.1, Stage III includes different formal variants of the DM: *vih* and *bih* are written realizations attested throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, whereas *pì*, *mbì*, and *mbè* are attestations from present-day use in social media. The latter are mere phonetic variants: they have a mirative meaning just like the written attestations in past centuries, so they do not constitute a proper further stage in the evolution. Besides, the phonetic changes reflected by these forms (devoicing and dissimilation of the consonant, lowering of the vowel) may well have occurred in the past: the fact that they are found in social media today does not entail that they are present-day innovations.

Finally, in order to clarify the diachronic relation between mirativity and correction, consider a case of bridging context, drawn from present-day data:

(9) FAMILY CHATTING

A: *c'era na / nu parrucchieri mi pari | bi, u fotografu*
c=era *n-a* *n-u* *parrucchier-i*
 LOC=be.PST.IPFV.3SG ART.INDF-F ART.INDF-M hair_dresser-M
mi=pari, *bi, u* *fotograf-u*
 OBL.1SG=seem.PRS.3SG DM ART.DEF.M.SG photographer-M.SG
 'there was a... a hair salon, I think. Oh, the photo studio!'

In (9), *bi* is not properly corrective, like in (4), because it does not mark the mistaken segment. Also, there is no formal clue to tell correction from mirativity in this example. In fact, the utterance might be read according to both values (mirativity and correction): the speaker expresses her surprise in reaction to some inaccuracy in her preceding utterance. Proper corrective uses have been identified through a formal feature, namely the scope of the DM. This is precisely the issue at stake for detecting a cycle, as discussed in the next subsection.

12.3.3 Spiral-cyclicity in the scope change of *bi*

As is generally agreed,¹⁰ DMs expand their scope alongside their discourse-pragmatic evolution: 'semantic-pragmatic scope of DMs extends beyond the sentence over the situation of discourse, that is, it relates the use of a DM directly to the organization of texts, the attitudes of the speaker, and/or speaker-hearer interaction' (Heine et al. 2021: 28–29, fn. 12). Typical but not restricted to DMs, scope expansion has been pointed out by Traugott and Dasher (2002) in their general framework of semantic change based on the conventionalization of invited inferences.

In the case of *bi*, scope change occurs according to the general tendency. Nevertheless, in the last stage of its evolution, the DM develops a corrective function that restricts its scope: after its expansion, its reduction is attested next, so that a back-and-forth movement can be conceived along the tendency of scope increase. Table 12.2 shows the different segments over which *bi* carries its scope, with references to examples seen above.

In Stage I (example (5)), *vidi* carries its scope over a clause ('of how much holiness was that bishop'), which is part of the wider proposition ('of how much holiness was that bishop, who by just staying and sitting could extinguish the fire by means of his sanctity'). Thus, it has scope within the proposition. In Stage II, *vi* has scope over the entire proposition ('who wins at first will lose at last'). In other

¹⁰ In different terms and approaches, cf. at least Traugott and Dasher (2002: 40, 281), Degand and Evers-Vermuel (2015: 76–77), Salameh et al. (2018: 122), and Heine et al. (2021: 28–29).

Table 12.2 Scope of *bì* in its discourse-pragmatic evolution

Stage	Ex.	Element [in brackets] <i>bì</i> carries its scope over	Function	Type of scope ^a
I	(5)	Vidi, Petru, [de quanta sanctitai fu kyllu episcupu]	imperative	SCOPE WITHIN PROPOSITION
II	(6)	Vì, chi [cui vinci primu perdi poi]	attention-getting	SCOPE OVER PROPOSITION
III	(8)	[(a man enters, soaking wet)] Bih, comu siti sculanti!	mirative	SCOPE OVER DISCOURSE
	(1)	[A: c'è il bambino piccolo, P, che ha fatto i disegni per tutt ⁺ per tutti gli zii] B: bì::		
	(2)	[picture of a friend] Mbiiiiiii chi priuuuu		
	(3)	[A: (sneezes three times)] B: bì!		
IV	(4)	a mia u psicologu, bì [u psicologu], u dietologu	corrective	SCOPE WITHIN PROPOSITION

^a The terminology in Traugott and Dasher (2002) is chosen for this table and in the text because it specifies the structural units over which an item carries its scope. On the contrary, the notion of semantic-pragmatic scope in the sense of Heine et al. (2021) provides only a distinction between scope over sentence and scope over discourse. A more detailed description of the back-and-forth scope change of *bì* is possible according to the Val.Es.Co. model of discourse segmentation (cf. Salameh et al. 2018): scope increases from 'sub-acts' (Stage I) to 'acts' (Stage II) and 'interventions' (Stage III), eventually moving back to 'sub-acts'.

words, it has scope over the proposition. In Stage III, scope is extended to the discourse and its context. Already in the 19th century (8), *bih* shows scope over the situational context described in the folk tale (a man entering, soaking wet), which we can infer by reading the words by the character ('Oh, how drenched you are!'). The scope is over the situational context or the discourse as well, in present-day speech data. In (1), it involves actual discourse; that is, the whole turn by the preceding speaker in the conversation ('there is the little kid, P, who made some drawings for all the aunts and uncles'). In (2), mirativity is exploited to comment on a Facebook post (part of the preceding of co-text) with the picture of a friend. In (3), the DM is used for reacting to an action of the interlocutor, who is sneezing repeatedly.

So far, scope expansion has taken place, consistently with the general tendency affecting DMs. In Stage IV, scope is eventually reduced, instead. In corrective uses, *bì* marks a specific part of the proposition (the one that needs correction; in example (4), 'my psychologist'): it has scope within the proposition. In the discourse-pragmatic evolution of *bì*, scope has increased at first, and it has subsequently decreased, so that a cycle is completed.

Along the dimension of scope change, a back-and-forth movement takes place, which is a continuous development: *bi* stems from the imperative, it acquires a pragmatic function (attention-getting), and gradually evolves into a DM. In this overall trajectory, a specific dimension is found, on which we can see a back-and-forth change (SCOPE WITHIN PROPOSITION > SCOPE OVER PROPOSITION > SCOPE OVER DISCOURSE > SCOPE WITHIN PROPOSITION).

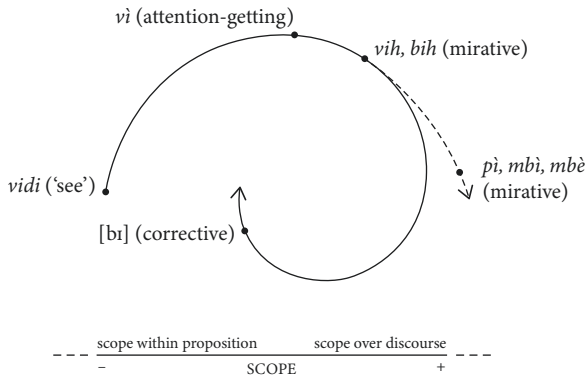


Figure 12.4 Spiral-cyclicity in the evolution of Sicilian *bi*.

In Figure 12.4, the dotted line represents the further phonetic reduction that affects the mirative marker, resulting in the variants *pi*, *mbi*, and *mbè*. These forms do not constitute a stage in the diachronic thread under investigation, as schematized in Table 12.1 (Section 12.3.2). Rather, the evolution of *bi* includes a split at Stage III, causing divergence between the original item developing the textual function of correction, and new formal variants limited to mirative marking.

Trajectories can look smooth and linear, thanks to analytic and interpretative efforts to account for the complexity of language change. In this perspective, the spiral in Figure 12.4 results from considering the four stages according to a specific dimension, or feature; that is, scope. Thus, a distinction has emerged, namely between single features and whole constructions, that can serve as a second criterion to discern different notions of cyclicity.

12.4 A typology of cyclicity

At the heart of different notions of cyclicity (Section 12.2), a first distinction regards (discontinuous) recurrence and (continuous) back-and-forth change. Depicted by waves and spirals, these types of change differ in terms of what kind of trajectory they develop. The analysis of *bi* suggests a second relevant distinction

regarding what kind of items are affected by change: a cycle is detected, with respect to a single feature; that is, scope (Section 12.3.3). Thus, we can distinguish cycles of features, such as *bi*, from cycles involving the rise of new constructions, such as the evolution of politeness markers in Latin *ROGO* and Italian *prego* (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a).

Classic cycles of pragmaticalization like the latter (Section 12.2.2) and cyclicity in the evolution of Sicilian *bi* (Section 12.3.3) differ not only in terms of trajectory (waves and spirals) but also in terms of items involved: whole new constructions or single features. The distinction between constructions and features may be elaborated according to the framework of Diachronic Construction Grammar, in terms of constructionalization and constructional shift (Section 12.4.1). Thus, intersecting the first distinction (recurrence vs. back-and-forth change) and the second one (constructional shift vs. constructionalization), a typology of cyclicity is proposed (Section 12.4.2).

12.4.1 Constructions and features: constructionalization and constructional shift

Diachronic Construction Grammar is a growing field within historical linguistics (cf. Traugott and Trousdale 2013; Smirnova and Sommerer 2020; Gildea and Barðdal 2023; *inter alia*). Despite specific theoretical orientations and approaches, it is based on the notion of construction, which is schematized in Figure 12.5 according to Croft's (2001: 18) generally agreed-upon formulation.

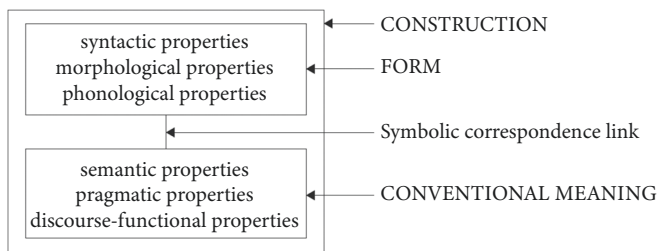


Figure 12.5 A construction and its features (from Traugott 2022: 26)

Essentially, a construction is a sign—that is, a form–meaning pair—whose symbolic link is not necessarily predictable (cf. Goldberg 2006: 5). Crucially, both form and conventional meaning represent clusters of traits, or features: phonological, morphological, and syntactic properties on the one hand; semantic, pragmatic, and discourse-functional ones on the other. Thus, a constructional approach ‘predicts that different components of a construction can be accessed

independently from others even though the construction is functionally a unit, and so it ‘provides a way of specifying how particular features of the constructions involved are modified over time’ (Traugott 2022: 31, 98). In this sense, Diachronic Construction Grammar has discussed a distinction between change involving the creation of a new construction and changes affecting one or more specific features:

Constructionalization is the establishment of a new symbolic link between form and meaning which has been replicated across a network of language users, and which involves an addition to the construction. (Traugott 2022: 49)

A constructional change is a change affecting one internal dimension of a construction. It does not involve the creation of a new node. (Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 26)

The distinction has been widely debated (cf. Börjars et al. 2015; Hilpert 2018; Smirnova and Sommerer 2020; Gildea and Barðdal 2023; inter alia). The most fundamental argument against it concerns the notion of construction in its Saussurean sense; that is, as a form–meaning pair: when change involves a feature, be it its meaning or its form, the whole construction is affected (cf. Smirnova and Sommerer 2020: 12–13). Precisely to avoid this implication, Traugott and Trousdale (Traugott, p.c.) have started using the label constructional ‘shift’ instead of ‘change’. Moreover, it is not straightforward to identify a threshold between changes happening within a construction and the rise of a new one, and ‘this threshold may turn out to be a line in the sand that is impossible to draw with certainty’ (Hilpert 2018: 27). Nonetheless, the distinction has not been discarded but rather downplayed (Gildea and Barðdal 2023), and more often redefined. Seen as a relative and analytical tool rather than an objective or categorical fact (Hilpert 2018; Flach 2020), the distinction is maintained in revised terms, namely node changes versus connectivity changes (Hilpert 2018) or node-internal changes versus node-creation (Smirnova and Sommerer 2020).

The cycles discussed in this chapter can be examined according to this opposition, namely constructionalization versus constructional shifts. In fact, opposing waves and spirals does not suffice to understand the different ways in which cycles are observed. Consider the difference in the two instances of spiral-cyclicity in Sicilian: the back-and-forth change of *mentri* is observed with constructionalization—that is, with the rise of the DM (*a*) *mentri*—whereas the spiral-like scope change of *bi* takes place after constructionalization—that is, it concerns internal shifts of the very same DM. Thus, if we intersect this distinction with that between recurrence (wave-cyclicity) and back-and-forth change (spiral-cyclicity), a typology of cyclicity can be suggested.

12.4.2 Types of cyclicity

A typology of cycles is schematized in Table 12.3, and the four types are illustrated with examples from the studies on cyclicity.

Table 12.3 A typology for cyclicity (with relevant examples)

TYPES OF CYCLICITY	Recurrence (waves)	Back-and-forth change (spirals)
Constructionalization (rise of new constructions)	Type 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ROGO</i> and <i>prego</i> (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a) • <i>macho</i> and <i>tío</i> (Pons and Llopis 2020) • <i>ainz</i> and <i>plutôt</i> (Hansen 2020a) 	Type 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>dizque</i> (Company 2018) • <i>mentri</i> (Scivoleto 2020; Section 12.2.3) • <i>ja/déjà</i> (Hansen 2014, this volume)
Constructional shift (change in specific features)	Type 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>però</i> and <i>per (ai)xò</i> (Cuenca 1992–1993) 	Type 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>bì</i> (Section 12.3.3) • Fr. neg. coord. conjunction (Hansen 2021a)

Type 1 represents wave-cyclicity of whole constructions; that is, a (discontinuous) recurrence of a constructionalization process. An example is the rise of politeness markers across Latin and Italian (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a), schematized in Figure 12.6.¹¹

The rise of politeness markers in Latin and Italian is a case of wave-cyclicity because it is about recurrence of a cline. In terms of trajectory, Figure 12.6 includes two different lines of development, corresponding to the two waves of the cycle, which need only two endpoints; that is, the original stage and the final one. In terms of items, recurrence involves the creation of a new construction. Verbs with a lexical meaning ('I ask/I pray') evolve as DMs with a politeness function ('please'): Latin *ROGO* and Italian *prego* emerge as new constructions. In fact, in Figure 12.6, change is relevant in both of the two internal boxes in the construction, form, and conventional meaning: the part-of-speech changes from verb to interjection, and the original semantics evolves into a politeness marking. This kind of evolution—from verb to DM—represents the rise of a new construction (cf. Gildea

¹¹ The following figures (12.6–12.9) are drawn from Traugott (2022), and they are based on the scheme of a construction given in Figure 12.5. The large boxes indicate whole constructions and their overall evolution (symbolized by '>'). Inside each construction, the two small boxes represent the properties of form (syntactic, morphological, phonological) and of conventional meaning (semantic, pragmatic, discourse-functional). Following Traugott (2022), only the properties that are relevant to the diachronic analysis are explicitly mentioned in the small boxes.

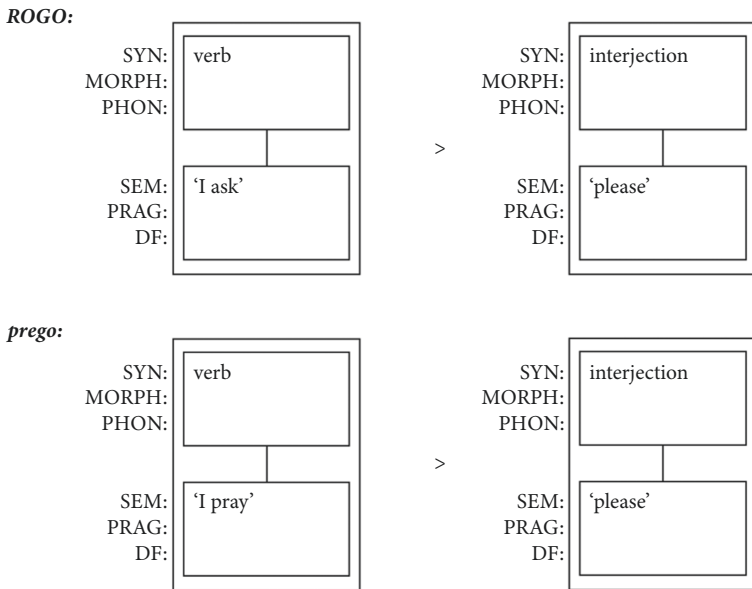


Figure 12.6 Recurrence (waves) of constructionalization: Latin *ROGO* and Italian *prego* (Type 1)

and Barðdal 2023: 23). As a DM, *prego* is completely emancipated from its verbal origin, as it has lost its original syntactic (agreement, argument structure) and semantic (meaning 'to pray') features, as shown by Ghezzi and Molinelli (2014a). This is also reflected by lexicography: a special entry is added in the vocabulary, labelled as an interjection, and dated back to 1868 (cf. *NDM*).

The same template in Figure 12.6 may be applied to other instances of Type 1, such as the cycles of *macho* and *tío* (Pons and Llopis 2020) and *ainz* and *plutôt* (Hansen 2020a): two distinct lines of constructionalization, including change in both form and meaning. In Spanish, allocutive constructions emerge in two recurrent waves. First the noun *macho* meaning 'male', and later the noun *tío* meaning 'uncle', develop syntactically as interjections, and their original semantics gives rise to the allocutive function 'mate'. Also French *ainz* ('before' > 'rather') and *plutôt* ('before/sooner' > 'rather') represent waves of constructionalization. In the overall evolution from content-level to context-level uses, change affects the word class (preposition and adverb becoming connectives) as well as meaning (from temporal anteriority to corrective function).

Type 2 represents wave-cyclicality as well, but it involves single features: it is about (discontinuous) recurrence of constructional shifts. It is schematized in Figure 12.7 by means of the case of *però* and *per (ai)xò* in Catalan (Cuenca 1992–1993).

As in Figure 12.6, Type 2 includes two distinct lines of development, which constitute the waves of the cycle. In this case, recurrence is not about the creation

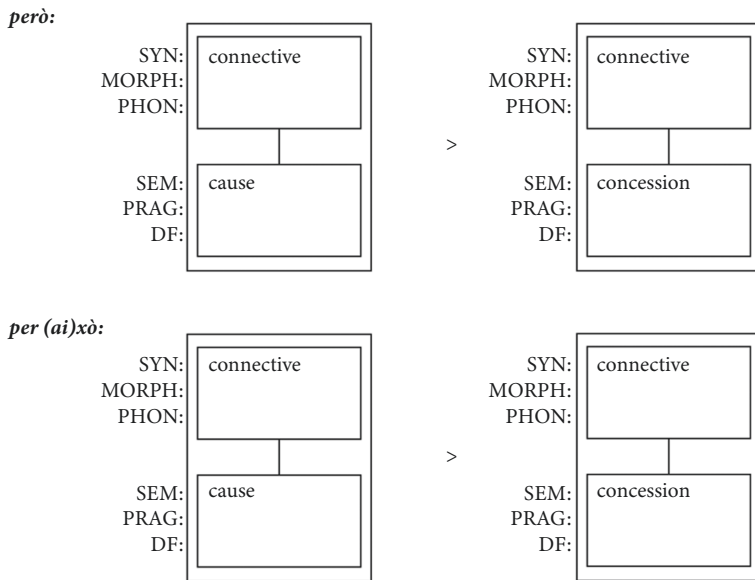


Figure 12.7 Recurrence (waves) of constructional shifts: Catalan *però* and *per (ai)xò* (Type 2).

of a new construction but it concerns rather its internal structure. First, stemming from a Latin prepositional phrase *PER HOC* with causal meaning ('for this'), *però* has developed a concessive meaning (cf. also the evolution of *però* in Italian; Mauri and Giacalone Ramat 2012: 198–207). Then, a parallel second wave follows: in present-day speech, the Catalan causal connective *per (ai)xò* ('for this') starts being used with concessive value as well.¹² In the case of Catalan studied by Cuenca (1992–1993), cyclicity concerns constructional shifts: the semantic properties change from cause to concession, restructuring both connectives, *però* at first and *per (ai)xò* afterwards.

Type 3 represents spiral-cyclicity of new constructions; that is, (continuous) back-and-forth movement in constructionalization. To exemplify this type, the evolution of *dizque* can be referred to (cf. Company 2018: 373–378). In Spanish, the full ditransitive verb *decir* 'to say' has been used with an evidential meaning since the 15th century (10a). In Mexican Spanish, since the 16th century, the verbal phrase *dizque* has coalesced as an evidential DM, literally '(it/he/she) says that' (10b). Finally, in present-day speech, the form has turned into an adjective, meaning 'supposed, not true' (10c):

¹² Catalan *per (ai)xò* is parallel to Latin *PER HOC*, but it is not its direct descendent (as is the case with *però*). For this reason, no back-and-forth change is observed but precisely the recurrence of a particular trajectory of semantic change.

occur in isolation. So, the spiral along the dimension of contrast takes place, and a new construction is created. The emergence of the new construction is reflected once again by lexicographical sources: the unverbated form *amentri* is included in Consolino (1988: s.v.), defined as an adverbial locution and translated into Italian ‘certamente, è così come tu dici’ (‘of course, it is just like you say’).

The particles *ja/déjà* are another instance of back-and-forth constructionalization. If the particles are not seen as distinct etymologically related forms (Hansen 2014, 2018a; cf. Section 12.2.2), but rather as an overall trajectory, we observe a ‘micro-cycle of pragmaticalization’ (Hansen, this volume). Stemming from Latin *IAM*, Old French *ja* pragmaticalized (from content-level to context-level uses, from micro-syntax to macro-syntax). The constructionalization of *déjà* (< *dès* ‘as of’ + *ja*) yields a de-pragmaticalized particle (content-level uses, micro-syntax). Then, this new item re-pragmaticalizes, in a way that resembles its predecessor. In other words, the trajectory of *ja/déjà* traces a spiral of constructionalization: as the new construction (*déjà*) emerges (out of the older one, *ja*, which disappears eventually), we can see a case of back-and-forth pragmaticalization.

In contrast to Types 1 and 2, Type 3 represents one line of development and three stages. In fact, while recurrence is a discontinuous change relating two ‘waves’ between two endpoints, back-and-forth trajectories are a kind of continuous change, affecting a single item. Also, in order for a spiral to be traced, three stages are required,¹⁴ so that a direction of change takes place at first (Stage I > Stage II) and is eventually reversed (Stage II > Stage III). The same applies to the last type of cyclicity (Figure 12.9).

Type 4 represents spiral-cyclicity of single features, i.e. (continuous) back-and-forth movement in constructional shifts. Taking Sicilian *bì* (Section 12.3.3) as an example, a single trajectory is schematized in Figure 12.9.

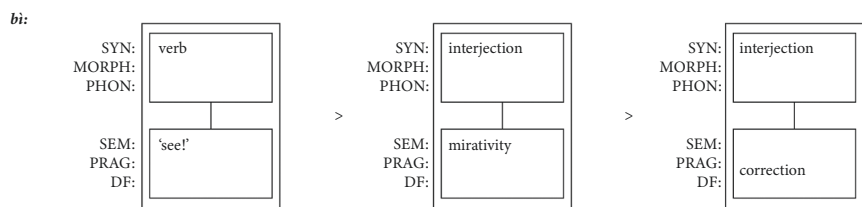


Figure 12.9 Back-and-forth (spirals) constructional shift: Sicilian *bì* (Type 4)

In its evolution, *bì* undergoes spiral-cyclicity with respect to a feature; that is, along the directional dimension of scope change (scope increase > scope decrease; Section 12.3.3). The change does not involve the creation of a new construction: the very same item—in traditional syntactic terms, an interjection—is used in new contexts. Constructionalization has occurred early in the evolution, when mirative

¹⁴ Cf. the distinction between two-step and three-step cycles by Pons and Llopis (2020).

bi has originated from the imperative verb. The spiral is traced later, and it regards the DM, which develops the corrective function,¹⁵ reversing the direction of scope change. The back-and-forth movement is a case of post-constructionalization constructional change (Traugott 2022: 51). A process of constructionalization has first taken place, leading from the imperative of ‘to see’ to the rise of the mirative DM. The DM has split from its lexical source, losing the syntactic features of a verb (agreement, argument structure). Lexicography reflects this evolution, adding a special entry for *bi* (cf. *VS*), which has diverged from the verb ‘to see’, like Italian *prego* from the verb ‘to pray’. The back-and-forth cycle concerns scope change, and it occurs later, when the very same DM develops the corrective function.

Type 4 is found also at the level of morphosyntax; that is, in the evolution the negative coordinating conjunction (‘neither’/‘nor’) from Latin to Modern French (Hansen 2021a). The construction undergoes change at the level of semantics: in Latin, the morphosyntactic structure is used in strong negative polarity contexts; by the age of Medieval and Renaissance French, it has extended to weak negative polarity ones; eventually, Modern French restricts it to strong negative polarity contexts once again. So, ‘what is etymologically one and the same linguistic item extends its functional profile, only to subsequently retract to something that in many ways resembles its starting point’ (Hansen 2021a: 251).¹⁶ A single line of continuous spiral-cyclicity has taken place, with reference to the dimension of strong/weak negative polarity contexts, restructuring the features of the construction rather than originating a brand new one.

12.5 Conclusion

This study has presented new empirical data on the evolution of DMs in Sicilian, and it has discussed the concept of cyclicity.¹⁷ By proposing a typology, it has tried to contribute to the understanding of the different senses and uses of this notion. These typology results from two general distinctions, which intersect and yield four types of cycles. The first distinction (already dealt with in Scivoletto 2020; Section 12.2) concerns the kind of trajectory: recurrence of a

¹⁵ In Figure 12.9, correction is treated as a discourse-pragmatic rather than semantic property (cf. Ariel 2010). In fact, correction is implied in the coded meaning (namely, mirativity) of *bi*. Although the meaning is not fully coded, corrective uses still count as a further and final stage in the evolution of the DM (cf. Scivoletto 2025).

¹⁶ The term ‘retracts’ points to a possible comparison between spiral-like cyclicity, proposed in this chapter, and the notion of ‘retraction’ by Haspelmath (2004).

¹⁷ The conception of cycles proposed in this study does not deal with the psychological reality of linguistic facts in the perspective of cognitive and usage-based approaches. Rather, cyclicity is discussed as an analytical tool, a theoretical notion to help linguists account for language change. I thank Elizabeth Traugott for drawing my attention to this general concern.

cline, represented by the metaphor of waves, is opposed to back-and-forth change on a cline, represented by a spiral traced alongside a specific dimension in a diachronic path.

The diachronic analysis of Sicilian *bi* (Section 12.3) has shown a cycle in terms of scope change, suggesting the importance of focusing on a specific feature within the overall evolution of linguistic item. Thus, a second distinction has emerged, concerning the kind of items involved. Within the perspective of Diachronic Construction Grammar (Section 12.4.1), a cycle can entail either constructionalization (i.e. the creation of new constructions) or constructional shifts (i.e. restructuring of a construction with respect to one or more of its features). Intersecting these two distinctions, four types of cycles have been analysed (Section 12.4.2): recurrence (waves) of constructionalization, recurrence (waves) of constructional shift, back-and-forth (spirals) constructionalization, and back-and-forth (spirals) constructional shift. This typology may contribute to explaining the different kinds of change that have been described under the notion of cyclicity (cf. also Hansen 2018a, this volume; Pons and Llopis 2020).

Among these types, wave-cyclicity (as recurrence of a given diachronic path; Section 12.2.2) would partly overlap with the general and well-established concept of grammaticalization and pragmaticalization clines.¹⁸ In fact, the key value of clines is precisely their recurrence, which makes them a valuable heuristic tool crosslinguistically. Still, the notion and instances of wave-cyclicity describe recurrence of clines not only across languages, but also within a single one. Also, wave-cycles in semantic-pragmatic change are treated at a greater level of granularity than morphosyntactic cycles (cf. footnote 7). As to spiral-cyclicity, this seems a rather specific notion of what a cycle may be. Back-and-forth changes with respect to a particular dimension represent a peculiar kind of trajectory, which can enhance our understanding of directionality in language change.¹⁹ Especially in this sense, cyclicity can be a very useful descriptive concept in the study of language change.

Corpora

ARTESIA = Mario Pagano, Salvatore Arcidiacono, and Ferdinando Raffaele (eds.). *Corpus Artesia. Archivio testuale del siciliano antico*. Università di Catania: Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani. <http://artesia.ovi.cnr.it> (last update: 31.12.2022).

¹⁸ To disentangle wave-cycles from clines, the role of renewal should be addressed in more detail (Traugott 2018a; cf. Hopper and Traugott 2003: 122–124; Reinöhl and Himmelmann 2017).

¹⁹ The traditional hypothesis of unidirectionality (cf. Hopper and Traugott 2003: 130–138; Haspelmath 2004) has been questioned, with particular reference to the evolution of DMs (cf. Company 2018; Pons 2018), to the framework of Diachronic Construction Grammar (Gildea and Barðdal 2023), and to non-linear forms of evolution between grammaticalization and pragmaticalization (Hansen, this volume).

Acknowledgements

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