Scope change and cyclicity
in the evolution of discourse markers in Sicilian

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Outline of the presentation

1. Introduction:

    images for cyclicity in semantic-pragmatic change

2. The case study:

    cyclical scope change in the evolution of DM *bì* in Sicilian

3. Conclusion:

    dimensions for cyclical change

1. Introduction

Cyclicity in semantic-pragmatic change:

"cycles of pragmaticalization represent 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"
(Molinelli 2014: 269)

"when the content-level source item of a context-level (i.e. pragmatic) marker is replaced, then the new item is likely eventually to become the source of context-level functions similar to those of the item it replaced"
(Hansen 2014: 164)

→ To account for semantic-pragmatic 'cycles', the images of the spiral is retrieved:

"The semantic/pragmatic cycles adduced in this paper have been shown to resemble morphosyntactic cycles, in as much as the evolutions in question are in several cases ultimately more like spirals than cycles in the strict sense. Thus, in each case, semantic/pragmatic renewal results in patterns of usage which are similar, but not identical, to those of the items that are being renewed"
(Hansen 2018: 70)

1. Introduction

The metaphor of the spiral:
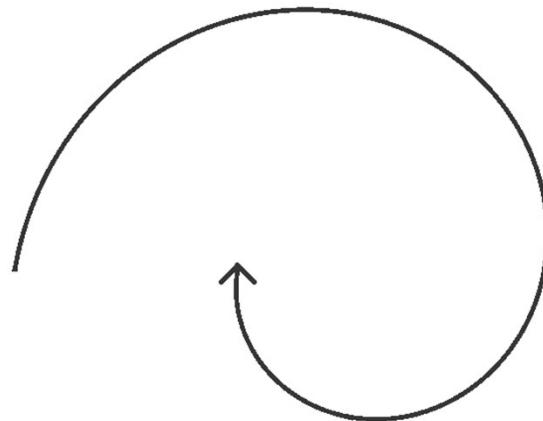
Gabelentz (1891): "Agglutinationstheorie" (change in analytic/synthetic types)

Meillet (1912): "évolution des formes grammaticales" (grammaticalization of lexical items)

Jespersen (1917): "negative cycle" (cyclic change in negative structures)

1. Introduction

The metaphor of the wave:
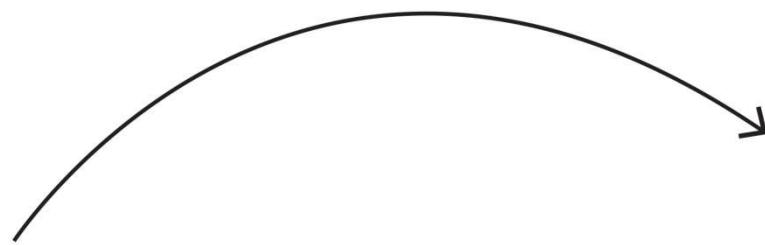
|	
Givón (1979):	discourse > syntax > morphology > morphophonemics > zero
Van Gelderen:	- Object Agreement: demonstrative/pronoun > agreement marker > zero
(2011, 2016)	- Copula Cycle: demonstrative > copula > zero
	- …

1. Introduction

Three-point *vs* two-point semantic-pragmatic cycles (Pons/Llopis 2020):
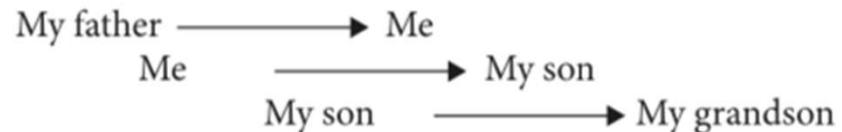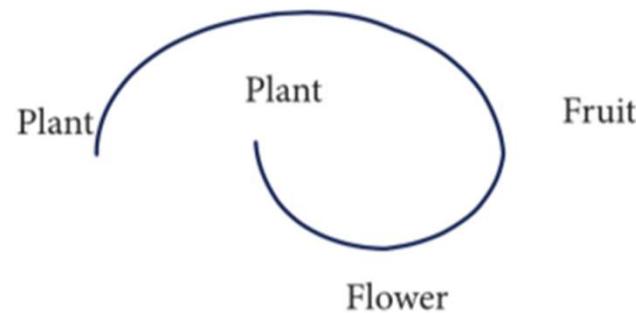
"all three foundational case studies of S–P [semantic pragmatic] cyclicity thus far (Cuenca 1992-1993; Ghezzi/Molinelli 2014; Hansen 2014) belong to the two-stage image of cyclicity" (Pons/Llopis 2020: 318)

But see Pardo (2021) and already Scivoletto (2020) …

1. Introduction

The evolution of *mentri* as a DM in Sicilian (Scivoletto 2020)

mentri (< lat. *dŭm ĭntĕrim*) 'while, in the meantime'

$$\text{TIME} \quad > \quad \text{CONTRAST}_{\text{OPPOSITION}} \quad > \quad \text{COUNTER-EXPECTACION} \quad > \quad \text{DM}$$

(- contrast)   (+ contrast)   (- contrast)

→   a semasiological cycle is accomplished

(the contrast function rises, develops, and eventually fades out)

that can be represented as a spiral …

1. Introduction

The evolution of *mentri* as a spiral (Scivoletto 2020):
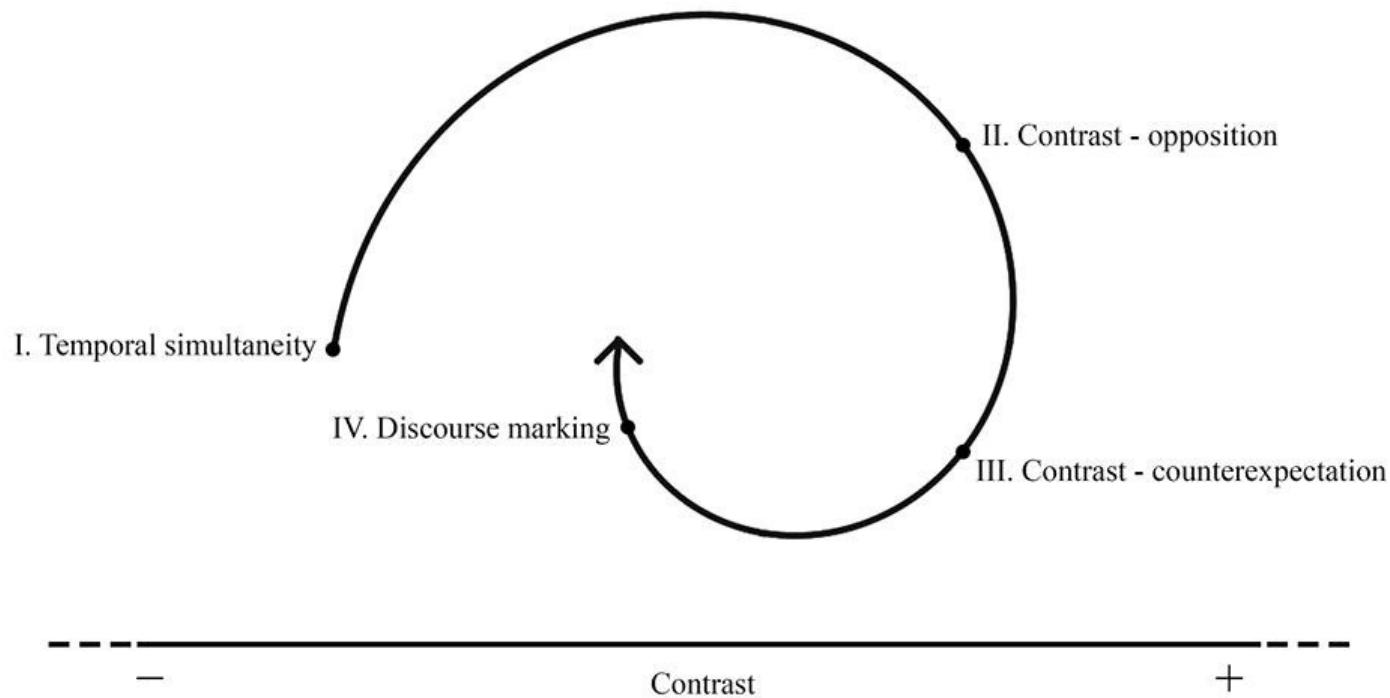
2. The case study

Methodological premise (cf. Scivoletto fc)

The data:

Synchronic data (present-day)

a) recorded spontaneous speech

b) a collection of CMC texts

 (computer-mediated-communication)

Diachronic data

a) *ARTESIA* corpus, 14th - 16th cent.

b) a survey of texts, 17th - 20th cent.

 (poems, drama, folk tales, etc.)

The area:

Geolinguistic area of South-eastern Sicilian;

data collected in Modica (pop. ca. 55.000), Sicily, Italy.

2. The case study

Theoretical premise:

   DMs evolve widening their scope:

s-w-proposition > s-o-proposition > s-o-discourse   (Traugott/Dasher 2002)

≈ subact   ≈ act   ≈ intervention   (Salameh/Estellés/Pons 2018)

Accordingly, Sicilian *bì* is shown to evolve as a discourse marker widening its scope.

Nevertheless, its scope decreases once again in a later development.

→ Hypothesis:

   cyclical (spiral-like) scope change in the evolution of *bì* as a DM

2. The case study

The form *bì*: "expression of wonder or surprise or wonder" (*VS*: *s.v. bbì!*).

In a synchronic perspective, the present-day polysemy of *bì* includes two main functions:

a) it helps the speaker mark some element of the situational or discursive context
   as new or unexpected; at the same time, appraising it.
   → function of mirativity
   (cf. Delancey 1997; Aikhenvald 2012)

b) it helps the speaker invalidate a piece of their previous discourse,
   which needs to be rectified.
   → function of correction, or self non-paraphrastic reformulation
   (cf. Gülich/Kotschi 1995; Pons 2013)

2. The case study

(1) DISCUSSING A PICTURE OF A KID

I:	*però ri M. n'avi assai*=	'but she has much of M.'
A:	=*ìu manc'u canuscissi [a ssa paṭṭri]*	'I wouldn't recognize his dad'
I:	=*[è veru?] no a ssa paṭṭri, a Mm. nâ facci*=	'doesn't she?'
G:	=*(xxx) M. (xxx) facci*=	'M. (xxx) face (xxx)'
I:	=*no*?	'doesn't she?'
G:	=*M. quann'[era nica]*	'M. as a child'
A:	*[pop+]* ***bì*** *si štutàu*!	'not at al/ Oh, it turned off!'
I:	*arà*!	'C'mon!'

2. The case study

(2) FAMILY CHATTING ABOUT CHRISTMAS

R: c'è il bambino piccolo, P., che ha fatto i disegni per tutt+ per tutti gli zii

        'there is the little kid, P., who made some drawings for all the aunts and uncles'

M: *bì*::

        'ooh!'

G: simpatico P.!

        'P. is so nice!'

2. The case study

Formal variants: *mbì*

(3) FACEBOOK POST: PICTURE OF A GIRL

    M: **Mbiiiiiii** chi priuuuu

          'Oh, how proud I am!'

2. The case study

Formal variants: *mbè*

(4) SMALL CAPS FACEBOOK POST: PICTURE OF A WOMAN

    M: **mbe mbe mbe**!!!!a mancautu tu

            'Oh, all wee needed was you!'

2. The case study

Formal variants: *pì*

(5) FACEBOOK POST: PICTURE OF A GIRL

    B: **Pi ppi ppi ppi ppiii**

        (Scritto non rende.

        L'audio richiedilo su Whatsapp)

        'Oh oh oh…

        Written it does not render.

        Ask for the sound on Whatsapp'

2. The case study

(6) FAMILY CHATTING

M: *a mia u psicolugu, **bì** u psicolugu, u dietolugu mi rissi* […]

'my psychologist, well not my psychologist, my dietician told me…'

2. The case study

(7) RELATIVES MEETING AT CHRISTMAS

N: [addressing R] *beddu miu, beddu beddu co cori cu tutt/*

        'My dear! Dear, dear! with my heart with all…'

V: ciao!

        'Hi!'

N: [addressing V] S.! ***bì*** S., *manc+=*

        'S.! Oh not S., I even…'

V: =V., sempre V.

        'V., always V.'

2. The case study

In a diachronic perspective,

bì stems from the verb *vidiri* 'to see' in its imperative form *vidi* 'see!'
through betacism [v] > [b]:

$$vidi \; > \; vì \; > \; bì \quad (\; > \; pì, \, mbì, \, mbè, \, bè \,)$$

2. The case study

Stage 1. *vidi* – verb, imperative 2SG

(8)   [G. De Fonte (1341; in ARTESIA)]

       Vidi, Peri, Bernardu Migiari meu cumpagnuni avi factu unu cuntractu […]

       'See, Peri, my good partner Bernardu Migiari has done a contract…'

→ A pragmatic use is emerging: *vidi* as an attention-getter

    (cf. Fagard 2010, Ghezzi/Molinelli 2015)

2. The case study

Stage 2. *vì* – attention-getter

(9)   [T. Bonfare, d. 1609; in Galeano 1645: 321]

Vì, chi cui vinci primu perdi poi

'See, that who wins at first will loose at last'

Note: phono-morphological reduction of the form;

use of the diacritic;

use of the comma.

2. The case study

Stage 3a. *vì / vih* – mirative

(10)   [V. Gangi, d. 1816, in Di Maria 1978: 25)

La scecca a sta nutizia   'The donkey after these news

Vih quantu preju senti!   Oh/look how proud she feels!'

(11)   [V. Gangi, d. 1816, in Di Maria 1978: 62)

Dd'ucchiuzzi ca lucenu,   'Those little eyes that shine,

Vih vih chi cosa rara!   Look, look how rare a thing!'

Note: use of repetition;

use of the grapheme ‹h›

2. The case study

Stage 3b. *bih* – mirative

(12)   [FOLK TALE IN PITRÈ (1873: 46)]

– «Figghiu mio, (dici) e sta chiavi?» – «**Vih**! comu mi lu scurdavi!»

'– «My son, he says, what about this key?» – «Oh! how did I forget it!»'

(13)   [FOLK TALE IN GUASTELLA (1884: 186)]

E i nuòssci mali, Signuri, quali su? Sunn'assai? ci rìssiru cianciennu i viddani. **Bih**! **bih**! **bih**!... cci rispusi 'u Signuri, i vuòssci mali su' quant'i pùlici n' 'o misi r' austu […]

'«And our woes, Lord, what are they? Are they many?», the peasants cried to him. «Oh! Oh! Oh! - the Lord answered them - your evils are as many as the fleas in the month of August»'

Note: no positive appraisal in the mirative value;

betacism.

2. The case study

Stage 4. *bì* – corrective: no attestations in historical data!

The corrective function seems to be a later development, and it originates from the mirative one, at least for two reasons:

a)   empirically, there are no historical attestations of the reformulative function; (chronological evidence)

b)   theoretically, the corrective function is a (specialised) outcome of the mirative one (diachronic reconstruction);

→ bridging contexts are found in present-day data …

2. The case study

(14) DISCUSSING ABOUT A PLACE IN TOWN

G: *l'autru lato è chistu cca ca si vinni, e puoi c'è a/ u/*[(xxx)]

('on the other side there is this one selling the place, and then there is the…')

M: [*c'era*] *na/ nu parrucchieri mi pari | **bì**, [*u fotografu*]

('there was a hairdresser I think, oh, a photographer')

G: [*no*] / *c'era, na vota c'era* (…)

('no, there was, once there was…')

→ *bì* as a change-of state token (Heritage 1984)

that specialized from a large set of contexts (mirativity)

to a more specific type (correction).

2. The case study

Evolving as a DM, *bì* expands its scope:

vidi	>	*vì*	>	*vì / bì*	(> *pì / mbì / mbè / bè*)
verb		attention-getting		mirativity	
s-w/o-prop.			**>**	**s-o-discourse**	

But in its later corrective function, the scope is again reduced:

vidi	>	*vì*	>	*vì / bì*	> *bì*
verb		attention-getting		mirativity	correction
s-w/o-prop.			**>**	**s-o-discourse**	**> s-w-proposition**

2. The case study

The evolution of *bì* as a spiral:

vi [attention getter]   vì / bì [mirative]

vidi [verb: 'see']   pì / mbì / mbè / bè [mirative]

bì [corrective]

Scope-w/o-proposition   Scope-o-discourse
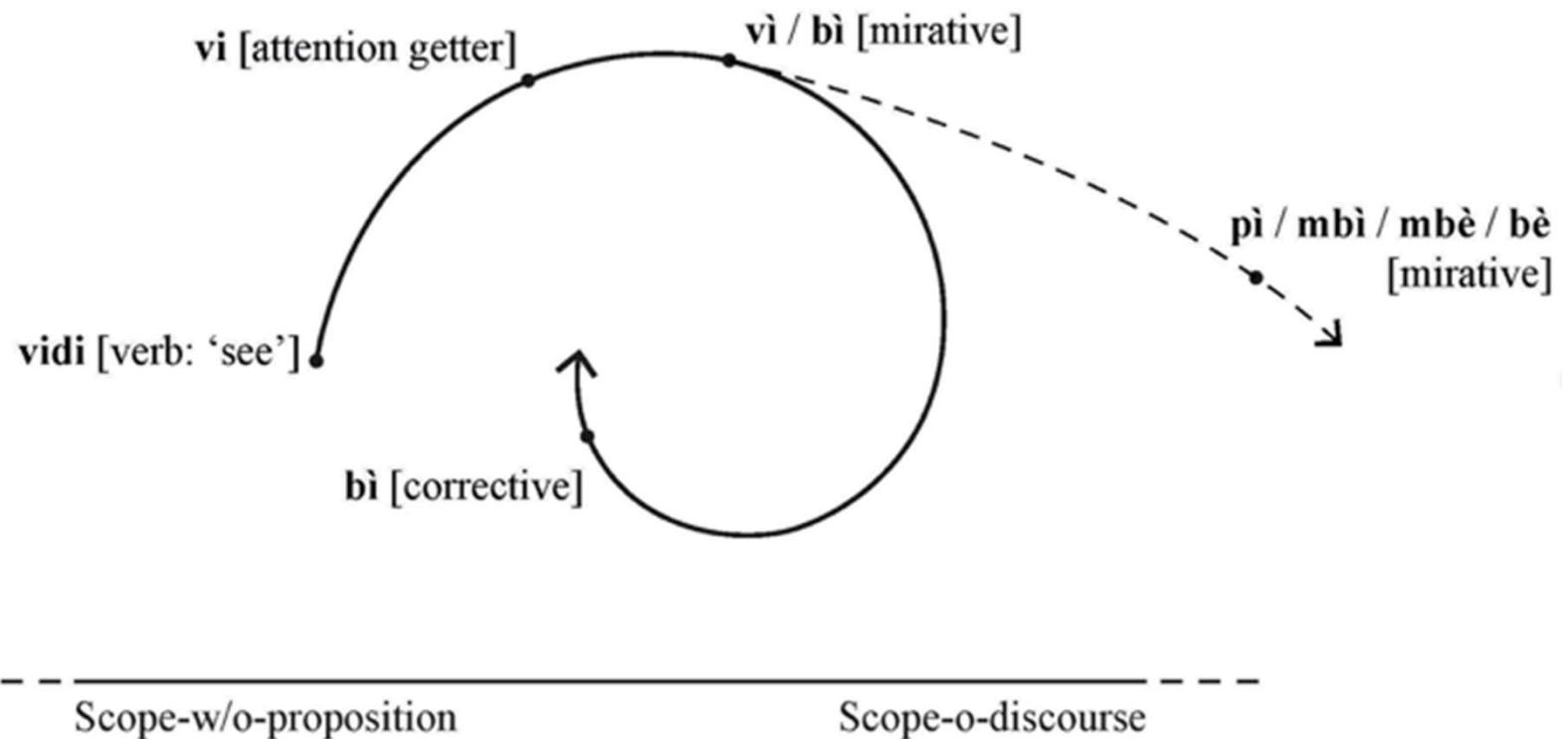
3. Conclusion

The metaphor of the wave:

it implies renewal, i.e. recurrence of a given change after an end point, a 'zero';

it indexes a set of discontinuous linear changes.

→ Wave-like cyclicity is similar to clines of grammaticalization,

and unidirectionality is maintained.

The metaphor of the spiral:

does not necessarily entail renewal, nor any 'zero' in the evolution;

it points to a continuous diachronic thread.

→ Spiral-like cyclicity seems a rather peculiar notion,

and unidirectionality is questioned: some 'backward' movement is suggested

(cf. Company 2018).

3. Conclusion

Cyclicity in semantic-pragmatic change (in a spiral-like fashion) can be detected with

reference to some **dimension**, along which a forth-and-back development is observed:
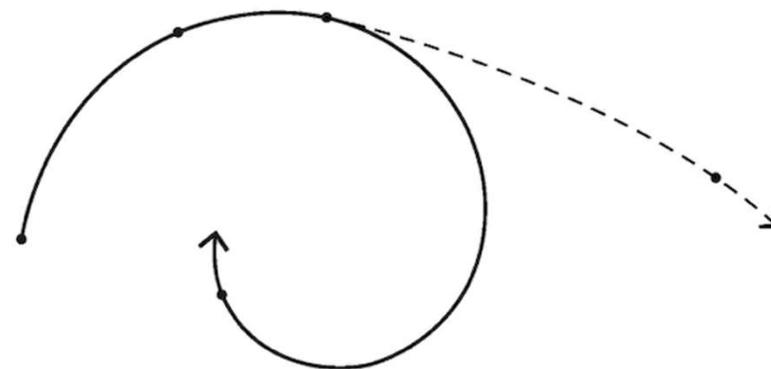
Sic. DMs show cyclicity according to a functional domain (*mentri*) and scope increase (*bi*)

→ further research: what other possible dimensions for cyclicity?

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Thank you!
Grazie!

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