

# From cause to contrast: a study in semantic change\*

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## 1. Introduction

In this paper we will discuss a particular case of semantic change undergone by the adverbial coordinating marker *però* in the history of Italian.<sup>1</sup> As shown in (1), *però* is nowadays used to code a contrast originating from the denial of some expectation and is roughly equivalent to *aber* in German (cf. Scorretti 1988: 230-231).

- (1) *Mario gioca bene però perde in continuazione.*  
Mario play:3.SG well but lose:3S.G continuously  
“Mario plays well but always loses.”

However, the specialization of *però* as an adversative marker is relatively recent. From its earliest occurrences in the 12<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it rather had a causal (*però che* “since, because”) or resultive function (*però* “therefore”, see example (3)). It is only in the 17<sup>th</sup> century that this marker is attested for the first time with an unambiguously adversative meaning.

The evolution of *però* thus shows a functional reversal: whereas in its first occurrences it introduced the cause or the result of a causal sequence, now it signals the *denial* of an expected causal sequence, that is, what is commonly classified as *counterexpectative contrast* (see Scorretti 1988: 260-263; Mauri 2007a: 186, 2007b: chapter 5).

Previous studies on the grammaticalization of adversative markers mainly focused on two patterns of semantic change: on the one hand the SPATIO-TEMPORAL > ADVERSATIVE pattern (Heine and Kuteva 2002: 291; Traugott 1986) attested in the evolution of markers such as *whereas* and *while* (Traugott 1995: 39-42); on the other hand the COMPARATIVE > ADVERSATIVE pattern, exemplified by the evolution of Lat. *magis* into It. *ma*, Fr. *mais* (cf. Ducrot and Vogt 1979).

By contrast, except for a few brief hints in the literature (see section 2.2), the development of an adversative function from a causal one has not been examined in detail yet, even though it is particularly intriguing due to the functional reversal it involves. In this paper we aim to describe such a semantic change by reconstructing the process through which the Italian adversative marker *però* developed its counterexpectative function from an original causal/resultive one.<sup>2</sup>

In section 2 a brief synchronic account of *però* and a summary of previous analyses will be given. In section 3 the development of the adversative function of *però* will be described through all its stages, which shows the crucial role played by negation. Finally, in section 4 we will argue that the semantic change from cause to contrast is context-driven and involves the subjectification of the relation involved.

## 2. Previous studies

### 2.1. A synchronic account of *però*

In contemporary usage, *però* encodes a contrast generated by the denial of some expectation ('*contrasto controaspettativo*' according to Scorretti 1988: 230-231; Battaglia 1961: 73). Leaving the exclamative use aside (*però!* "Wow!"), counterexpectative contrast is the only function associated with *però* as a clause linkage device (see example (1)).

*Però* is only partially equivalent to the general adversative marker *ma* "but", which has a broader semantic domain and may express both counterexpectative and corrective contrast.<sup>3</sup> *Però* is functionally rather similar to German *aber* and Spanish *pero*, and it shares with the latter its etymological origin (< Lat. *per hoc*).

As argued by Scorretti (1988: 231-232), *però* may cooccur with another coordinating marker such as *e* 'and' (*Mario gioca bene e però perde* 'Mario plays well and *però* loses'), whereas this is not possible for *ma*. Therefore, according to the basic criterion for distinguishing adverbial from pure coordinating devices (see Dik 1968: 34), *ma* is classified as a pure coordinating marker, while *però* is considered an adverbial coordinating marker.

Moreover, besides occurring in the initial position in the second member of a coordinating construction, as exemplified in (1), this marker is often

found either within a clause, as in (2a), or at the end, as an afterthought, as in (2b).

- (2) a. *Mario gioca bene, perde però in continuazione.*  
b. *Mario gioca bene, perde in continuazione però.*

As said above, the functional and syntactic properties just described for *però* in Modern Italian do not hold for its earliest occurrences in Old Italian. Yet, before describing in detail the semantic change undergone by this marker and its syntactic implications, let us first briefly examine how its development has been explained by previous scholars.

## 2.2. Earlier analyses

The development of *però* has been mentioned only briefly in a few studies, none of which specifically focused on this topic. Marconi and Bertinetto (1984: 490, 507) make a short remark on the history of *però* at the end of a detailed account of the evolution of Latin *magis* into Italian *ma*. They argue that the adversative function of *però* has its origins in the frequent cooccurrence of this marker with the contrastive conjunction *ma* (in sequences like *ma però*). Such cooccurrence would have modified the semantics of *però* from an original resultive function to a later adversative one. However, as will be shown in section 3, the cooccurrence of *ma* and *però* was rather rare and its low frequency does not support the hypothesis proposed by Marconi and Bertinetto.

Rohlf's (1969: 170) argues that the modern adversative function of *però* developed from the original resultive meaning through the intermediate phase 'despite all this>nonetheless', which would also be attested in Old Spanish. However, he gives no evidence for this intermediate stage and does not explain how the change from the resultive into the concessive function would have occurred.

According to Corominas and Pascual (1997: 495) and García (1999: 3856), the adversative meaning of Spanish *pero* arose in negative contexts, where *pero* acquired a concessive nuance.<sup>4</sup> The interplay between negation and resultive function is a promising explanation, but neither author provides any evidence or examples for this hypothesis.

The role of negative contexts is also discussed by Mazzoleni in a footnote (2002: 407), where he cites Mussafia (1983: 54) in stating that the

scope of negation over the causal/resultive connective may give rise to an adversative interpretation of the clause linkage (*'not for that...'*). It is in such ambiguous contexts that *però* would have developed its 'denial of expectation' function, as will be shown in section 3.2.

Interesting remarks on negated causality contexts are made by König and Siemund (2000) too, even though their study does not focus on adversative markers but takes the concessive relation into account. In fact, concessivity shares a central semantic aspect with counterexpectative contrast, that is, the denial of an expected causal sequence. The propositional content of *'Paul was ill but went to the cinema'* is indeed roughly equivalent to that of *'Even though Paul was ill, he went to the cinema'*, if we do not take into account the coordinate vs. subordinate nature of the two relations. Therefore, although they do not mention the specific case of *però*, their suggestions on causality and concessivity will turn out to be relevant to this analysis too, as will be shown in detail in section 3.2.

Except for the few above mentioned studies, the semantic change from cause to contrast and in particular the development of the adversative function of *però* have received little attention in the literature. In what follows, we will reconstruct the stages through which this marker has evolved, showing in what way negative contexts have triggered a process of reanalysis.

### **3. A history of *però***

From its earliest occurrences in the 12<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>5</sup> *però* is attested with a resultive function, which directly continues the meaning of its late Latin antecedent *per hoc*. As is also pointed out by Corominas and Pascual (1997: 495), *per hoc* gradually replaced *propter hoc* in Pliny, Apuleius, Quintilian and, more generally, in texts from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century on. Christian Latin texts show that *per hoc* is especially frequent as a resultive clause linkage device in Augustine (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century), where it is often preceded by *ac* 'and'. Its use continued into Medieval Latin.

The first phase of grammaticalization from Latin to Romance thus involves phonological erosion of Latin *per hoc* to Old Italian *però*, which leads to loss of morphological transparency and univerbation (see Hopper and Traugott 1993; Lehmann 1995; Heine 2003). However, since our

primary concern here is the semantic change from cause/result to contrast, we will not explore the issue of the Latin origin of *però* any further.

In Old Italian, *però* was indeed characterized by two functions, a causal ('since') and a resultive ('therefore') one (see example (3)). The semantic change we are interested in originated from the resultive meaning in very specific contexts, that is, after a negation that had scope over the cause-effect relation.

We will first examine the semantic and syntactic properties of *però* in its original causal and resultive functions (section 3.1.). The following discussion is based on 41 texts from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Text Sample at the end of the paper), which were searched by means of automatic tools (WordSmith, ConcGram). This made it possible to enrich the qualitative analysis with relevant quantitative data.

In section 3.2. the semantic change from resultive to adversative will be described and exemplified in detail.

### 3.1. *Però che* and *però*: cause and result

In Old Italian texts from the 13<sup>th</sup> until the 15<sup>th</sup> century, one of the most widespread constructions introducing a cause within a causal sequence is *però che* (Vignuzzi 1973b; Barbera, forthcoming), meaning 'since, because'. In this function, *però* is always followed by *che* and no other linguistic material may be inserted in between. Thus, they constitute a unitary and inseparable block. The subordinate causal clause introduced by *però che* could either precede the main clause, as shown by the first occurrence in example (3), or follow it.<sup>6</sup>

The use of *però che* with a causal function became rarer during the 16<sup>th</sup> century and almost disappeared from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on, being replaced by *perché* and *poiché*. Thus, for some centuries, the causal value of *però che* coexisted with the resultive value of *però* 'therefore', as shown by example (3).

- (3) Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia*, (1305-1321) *Inferno XXXI*, 23-28.

*Ed elli a me: «Però che tu trascorri*  
and he to me since you pass:2.SG  
*per le tenebre troppo da la lungi,*

through DEF darkness:pl too.much from DEF far.away  
*avvien che poi nel maginare abborri.*  
 happen:3.SG that afterwards in.DEF imagine err:2.SG  
*Tu vedrai ben, se tu là ti congiungi,*  
 you see:FUT:2.SG well if you there 2.SG.ACC join:2.SG  
*quanto 'l senso s' inganna di lontano;*  
 how.much DEF sense itself deceive:3.SG from far.away  
*però alquanto più te stesso pungi».*  
 therefore somewhat more yourself sting:2.SG  
 “And he to me: «Because thou peerest forth / Athwart the darkness at  
 too great distance, / it happens that thou errest in thy fancy. / Well  
 shalt thou see, if thou arrivest there, / how much the sense deceives  
 itself by distance; / therefore a little faster spur thee on.»” (English  
 translation by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1861)

As a resultive marker, *però* is usually placed in initial clause-position often following the conjunction *e*, which signals continuity with what was said in the previous discourse (example (4)).

- (4) Agnolo Ambrogini, alias Poliziano, *Deti piacevoli*, 38 (1479)

*Messer Rinaldo, io ho inteso che voi*  
 Sir Rinaldo I have:1.SG heard that 2.PL  
*impazzaste una volta, e però vi prego*  
 go.mad:PST:2.PL one time and therefore 2.PL.ACC pray:1.SG  
*che voi m' insegnate come voi faceste*  
 that 2.PL 1.SG.DAT teach:2.PL how 2.PL manage:PST:2.PL  
*a guarire [...]*  
 to recover  
 ‘Sir Rinaldo, I have heard that you once went mad, and therefore I  
 pray you to teach me how you managed to recover.’

Resultive *però* is frequent in texts from the 12<sup>th</sup> century until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, becoming increasingly learned and rare after about 1700. In *I Malavoglia*, a novel written by Giovanni Verga in 1881, no resultive occurrence of *però* is attested. The resultive meaning is instead systematically conveyed by *perciò*, which shares with *però* the origin in the Latin construction *per hoc*, but did not develop any counterexpectative meaning. Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *però* has only had an adversative meaning.

3.2 (Non) *però*: from non-resultive to adversative

As Vignuzzi (1973a: 427) points out, a few rare occurrences of *però* allowing an adversative interpretation are already attested in the *Divina Commedia*, as exemplified in (5). However, as he argues, the basic meaning of the marker in such contexts is ‘therefore, for that’ and the counterexpectative reading is only collateral and determined by the context.

- (5) Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia* (1305-1321), *Paradiso XVII*, 93-96.

*Poi giunse: «Figlio, queste son le chiose*  
 then add:PST:3.SG son these be.3.PL DEF.PL commentary:PL  
*di quel che ti fu detto; ecco*  
 of that which 2.SG.DAT be.PST:3.SG said here.are  
*le 'nsidie che dietro a pochi giri son*  
 DEF.PL snare.PL that behind to few round.PL be:3.PL  
*nascose. Non vo' però ch' a'*  
 hidden:PL NEG want.1.SG for.that/however that DAT  
*tuoi vicini invidie [...]*».  
 your.PL neighbour.PL envy:2SG

‘Then added: "Son, these are the commentaries/ On what was said to thee; behold the snares / That are concealed behind few revolutions; / Yet would I not thy neighbours thou shouldst envy, [...]' [English translation by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1861]

The contexts that allow an adversative interpretation are characterized by the presence of some wide scope negation, as in (5) and (6). In such cases, *però* introduces some consequence that does not take place despite expectations, determining a contrast between the cause and the denial of the expected effect.

- (6) Leon Battista Alberti, *I Libri della famiglia*, Prologue (1433-1441)

*Si fu la loro immensa gloria spesso dalla*  
 if be.PST:3.SG DEF their immense glory often from:DEF  
*invidiosa fortuna interrupta, non però fu*  
 adverse fortune interrupted NEG for.that be.PST:3.SG

*denegata alla virtù*  
negated to:DEF virtue  
'If their immense glory was often obstructed by adverse fortune, not  
for that was it denied to virtue.'

Sentences like (6) are ambiguous between a negative-resultive and a counterexpectative reading: both interpretations 'not for that was it denied...' and 'but it was not denied...' make perfect sense. However, the contrast generated by the frustration of the expected cause-effect sequence is not explicitly coded, but only inferred from the negation of the consequence. It is thus plausible that *però*, when preceded by a negation, came to be interpreted by speakers as an overt marker of contrast. In particular, it was reanalyzed as a marker of a specific type of contrast, i.e. the one generated by the denial of an expected causal sequence.

The ambiguity of cases like (6) is due to the fact that the frustration of a causal sequence is a conceptual aspect shared by both negative causal and counterexpectative contexts. As already mentioned in section 2.2, negative contexts are viewed by König and Siemund (2000) as pointing out the logical equivalence between negated causality and concessivity. In fact, the concessive relation is semantically equivalent to the counterexpectative one, at least for what concerns the denial of an expected effect (see section 2.2). Therefore König and Siemund's analysis turns out to be insightful for this study too, even though they make no explicit reference to *però*. By explaining why some contexts may be ambiguous between two apparently contradictory interpretations like causality and concessivity, it becomes clear why those contexts may be ambiguous also between a causal and a counterexpectative contrast reading.

According to König and Siemund, the connection between two contradictory relations such as causal and concessive is evident if we take negative contexts into account. An external negation that has scope over a causal relation is equivalent to an internal negation in a concessive or adversative linkage. In other words, negated causality [  $\neg$  because of p, q ] (7a) is equivalent to a concessive construction containing a negation [ although p,  $\neg$  q ] (7b) (König and Siemund 2000: 354). To these two formalizations we may further add a third one with internal negation, namely the counterexpectative relation [ p, however  $\neg$  q ] (7c), which is still equivalent to negated causality.

(7) a. *This hotel is **not** [less comfortable because it is cheap].*



*This hotel is cheap, **not** [because of that is it less comfortable].*

b. *Although this hotel is cheap, it is **not** less comfortable =*

c. *This hotel is cheap, it is **not** however less comfortable =*

*This hotel is cheap, but it is **not** less comfortable.*

The process of reanalysis of *però* is thus based on the semantic equivalence existing between (7a) and (7c): in ambiguous contexts, where a cause was followed by the denial of its consequence (e.g. (5), (6), (8)), negative-resultive *non però* 'not because of that' was reanalyzed as adversative *non però* 'not however'.

Although the same connective is rarely used to express both a causal and a concessive function (Kortmann 1997: 202), König and Siemund point out some cases of causal markers developing into concessive ones such as English *for all* (2000: 346). The pattern of development whereby *però* became an adversative connective is slightly different since it involves the development of a causal marker into a counterexpectative one, but still it is a remarkable development, which, as our data show, originated just in those negated contexts which are ambiguous between the two readings.

Occurrences of *non però* are rather rare in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries (in the *Divina Commedia* there are only 6 instances out of 163 occurrences of *però*) and become increasingly frequent from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in contexts which generally allow for an ambiguous reading. Especially during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, *non però* is very frequently used as a clause linkage device: in Ludovico Ariosto's poem *Orlando furioso* (1516), 80 out of 148 occurrences of *però* (54%) show the sequence *non però* linking a cause to the denial of its consequence and, more in general, 114 out of 148 occurrences of *però* are preceded by negation. In such negative constructions, *però* may either occur right after the negation, as in (6), or after the verb, as shown in (8).

(8) Luigi Pulci, *Il Morgante*, XX (1478)

*E benché tutto il mondo qua in aiuto*

and although all DEF world here in help

[...] *venga a mia vendetta[...]*

come.SUBJ:3.SG to my revenge

*Non riarò però quell ch' ho*

NEG regain.FUT:1.SG for that/however that which have.1.SG

*perduto.*

lost

‘[...] and although all the world here to help [...] comes for my revenge [...], I will not for that/however have back what I lost.’

The negated resultive construction frequently occurs in the environment of other contrast markers, such as a concessive clause preceding the main one, as in (8), or, more rarely, a connective like *ma*. Such redundancy may depend on the semantics of *però*, which is still ambiguous during this phase and is therefore reinforced by other more clearly adversative means.

The adversative reading of *però* was strictly connected with the presence of negation for a long period of time (about three centuries). The earliest, rare occurrences of *però* without a negation and with a clearly adversative function (see example (9)) are found at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Cases like (9) show that the process of reanalysis is complete and *però* has been re-semanticized as a marker of counterexpectative contrast.

- (9) Paolo Sarpi, Istorìa del Concilio Tridentino, I (1619)

[...] *il quale, se ben mandato dal pontefice [...]*  
REL although sent by.DEF pope  
*intervenne però come mandato da Francia [...]*  
partecipate.PST:3.SG however as sent by France  
‘[...] who, even though sent by the Pope,[...] participated however as if he was sent by France.’

There is an interesting temporal coincidence between the development of *però* as an adversative connective and the disappearance of *però che* with a causal function. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, causal subordination is almost exclusively introduced by *perché* and *poiché*. This may be due to two reasons. First, *però* had increased the number of its functions, thus giving rise to the development of new senses, which in turn caused ambiguity and hence a reduction in functions. Second, the frequency of occurrence of *però* in main clauses increased as a result of the development of the adversative meaning, since both adversative and resultive can appear in main clauses. Consequently, the disappearance of *però che* was favored, in that it was less frequent, since the causal function occurred in subordinate clauses.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the resultive and the adversative functions of *però* coexist but show different syntactic distributions. In its resultive meaning, *però* always occurs in clause-initial position and is often preceded by *e* (cf. example (4)). By contrast, when it has a counterexpectative value, *però* tends to be postposed, either after the verb or at the end of the second clause, as shown in (9). In other words, the ambiguous semantics of the marker is disambiguated by the syntactic context.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *però* only rarely occurs with a resultive function and the syntactic contexts where it is used as a counterexpectative marker start to include also the initial position, where it is commonly found also in modern Italian (see example (1)). Therefore, the disappearance of the resultive function of *però* and the consequent specialization of this marker as an adversative coordinating marker is recent and must be located between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### 4. Concluding remarks: semantic change and subjectivization

As pointed out by Traugott (1995: 32), subjectivization in grammaticalization concerns the development of a grammatically identifiable expression of the speaker's belief or attitude to what is said. Traugott provides a number of examples involving a shift from relative objective reference to functions based in speaker's attitude, such as *let us*, *let alone*, *I think*, *while*, etc. (Traugott and Dasher 2002, Traugott 1999).

The data discussed here suggest a similar development for the causal to adversative interpretation of the adverbial coordinating marker *però* in Italian. To sum up, we have shown that:

Latin (*ac*) *per hoc* is attested as a connective element only from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century in contexts in which it provides the reason for some conclusion.

In Old Italian texts, *però* normally has a resultive meaning ('therefore, as a result'), while *però che* (together with *perché*) is used as causal connective 'because'. Some examples, however, were provided of the kind of context in which an adversative inference might have originated (see examples (5), (6) and (8)). Such contexts appear to be constrained by the presence of negation. The inference of contrast does not seem to be dominant in earlier texts; rather, it seems a potential interpretation which has coexisted for some centuries alongside the meanings of causality and consequence. In the literature on grammaticalization this phase of

coexistence is referred to as *layering* (Hopper 1991; Hopper and Traugott 1993).

We have found evidence that the adversative interpretation of resultive *però* was grammaticalized in the period in which *però che* “because” was replaced by *perché* (as we said, both connectives coexisted in Old Italian). In the same period, the resultive meaning of ‘therefore’ was consistently expressed by *perciò* and this provided an opportunity for *però* to extend the contrastive interpretation which conventionalized the unexpectedness of some situation. There was no change in grammatical status, since *però* maintained its status as an adverbial coordinating marker, but a process of semantic reanalysis focusing on the speaker’s attitude took place.

A causal relation may have different degrees of subjectivity (cf. Pander Maat and Degand 2001; Pander Maat and Sanders 2001; Sweetser 1990) depending on the degree of speaker involvement. The relation may be objectively established between two states of affairs (on the content level, with a minimal degree of speaker involvement), between a state of affair and a speaker’s assumption (on the epistemic level, in this case the speaker is involved with an inferential process) or between a state of affair and a speech act (on the speech-act level, in this case the speaker is involved with an action).

In other words, causality may be based on objective circumstances of the real world and does not necessarily imply the presence of an inferential process involving the speaker’s assumptions. In our sample, all the attested occurrences of resultive *però* are of the first type, that is, they belong to the content level (cf. examples (3), (4) and (10)).

(10) Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Decameron*, Third Day - Fifth Story (1478)

[...] *Or qui non resta a dire al presente*  
 now here NEG remain:3.SG to say to:DEF present  
*altro; e però, carissima mia donna, [...] a Dio*  
 more and therefore dearest my lady to God  
*v' accomando.*  
 you.ACC entrust.1.SG

‘Now there is nothing else to say here at present; and therefore, my dearest Lady, [...] I entrust you to God.’

On the other hand, when *però* is preceded by a negation (cf. examples (5), (6) and (8)), the relation is ambiguous: if it is interpreted as belonging

to the content level, the reading is resultive, whereas if it is interpreted as involving a speaker's assumption, the reading is adversative. At the final stage of this semantic change, when the presence of a negation is not compulsory any more, the only possible reading of *però* is counterexpectative and it necessarily involves the denial of some assumption. As argued by Lang (2000: 243-244), the interpretation of a counterexpectative contrast always implies inferring an assumption that is denied by one of the two statements (cf. sections 2.1. and 3.2.).

This subjectivity of the adversative relation has already been pointed out in linguistic research. As Malchukov (2004: 183) observes, two states of affairs standing in a contrast relation (*i*) have some aspects in common, (*ii*) are different under some respects (otherwise they would be identical) and, most importantly, (*iii*) they are compared with respect to these differences. Rudolph (1996: 20) also describes the connection of contrast as the speaker's *opinion* that two states of affairs are valid simultaneously and that the second state of affairs conflicts with some information given in the first one. In other words, contrast is characterized by the speaker's evaluation of similarities and dissimilarities with respect to some previous expectations.

As a consequence, contrast cannot be exclusively based on objective circumstances of the world independently of the speaker's attitude, but it rather depends on the speaker's inferential ability. Under this respect, counterexpectative contrast may be regarded as more subjective than causality.

Thus the history of *però* is a further example of discourse-based development of connectives which come to express speaker-based functions out of some earlier, more "objective" meanings. The adversative/concessive interpretation developed in negative contexts and expressed the speaker's assessment of an unexpected relation between two events or two propositions. A further step in the grammaticalization process of the adversative relation occurred when the negation ceased to be required, and *però* directly introduced the second proposition as the marker of some conclusion unexpected for the speaker. It is possible to analyze this change as a metonymical change favored by the contiguity of the negation and *però*: the negative force is transferred to the contrastive marker.

It should be added that nowadays the old meaning of *però* is not recoverable by inference. This is what we should expect if the hypothesis of unidirectionality of inferences is correct (Traugott and König 1991:199).

Let us conclude with some questions for grammaticalization theory: how crucial are semantic bleaching and phonological reduction to

grammaticalization (the issue is discussed by Campbell 2001: 118, among others)?

Phonological reduction in *però* (< Latin *per hoc*) is probably a motivating factor for the replacement of *però* as a resultive marker with more transparent, analytical constructions: *perciò*, *per ciò*, *per questo* (*motivo*) “for that/this reason”. By contrast, the notion of semantic bleaching does not seem to apply to the semantic change of *però* from a resultive to a counterexpectative meaning. Even though some parts of its meaning were lost, namely the causal and the resultive functions, a change in perspective took place which corresponds to the strengthening of the speaker’s point of view.

## Abbreviations

1	first person	NEG	negative
2	second person	PL	plural
3	third person	PST	past
ACC	accusative	REFL	reflexive
DAT	dative	REL	relative pronoun
DEF	definite article	SG	singular
FUT	future	SUBJ	subjunctive

## Text sample

*XIII*: Novellino; Tesoretto (Brunetto Latini). *XIV*: - Divina Commedia (Dante Alighieri); Decameron (Giovanni Boccaccio). *XV*: Elementi di pittura, Uxoria, Sofrona, Naufragus, I libri della famiglia, Deifira, De Iciarchia, De amore, Cena familiaris (Leon Battista Alberti); Il Morgante (Luigi Pulci); L’Orlando Innamorato (Matteo Maria Boiardo); Trattato, Scritti, Aforismi (Leonardo da Vinci). *XVI*: Orlando Furioso (Ludovico Ariosto); La Cortigiana, Angelica (Pietro Aretino); Vita (Benvenuto Cellini); Gerusalemme conquistata, Discorso sulla virtù femminile e donnesca, Aminta (Torquato Tasso). *XVII*: La città del sole, Le lettere (Tommaso Campanella); Adone, Amori (Gianbattista Marino); Istoria del Concilio Tridentino (Paolo Sarpi). *XVIII*: Autobiografia, Principi di scienza nuova (Gianbattista Vico); Oreste, Vita (Vittorio Alfieri). *XIX*: I promessi sposi (Alessandro Manzoni); Zibaldone, Paralipomeni della Batracomiomachia, Guerra dei topi e delle rane (Giacomo Leopardi); I Malavoglia, Mastro Don Gesualdo (Giovanni Verga).

## Notes

- \* This work is the result of a continuous exchange of ideas between the two authors. However, Caterina Mauri is responsible for the writing of sections 2 and 3 and Anna Giacalone Ramat is responsible for the writing of sections 1 and 4.
1. In defining *però* as an ‘adverbial coordinating marker’ we follow Scorretti (1988: 230), who uses the label ‘operatore avverbiale di coordinazione’, literally ‘adverbial operator of coordination’. By *coordinating marker* it is meant here any overt marker coding a coordination relation (see Mauri 2007b: chapters 1 and 2 for a detailed discussion) and by *adversative marker* it is meant any overt marker coding a coordination relation of contrast.
  2. German *dafür*, etymologically the same as *però*, *perciò*, has undergone a similar semantic change from causal “therefore” to contrastive “but, on the other hand”:  
*Sie ist klein, dafür wohl proportioniert.*  
 ‘she is short, but well-proportioned.’ (Marconi and Bertinetto 1984: 507).  
 Further research is however needed to reach a fuller understanding of the development of *dafür*.
  3. The term *corrective contrast* refers to the contrast generated by the negation of a state of affairs and by its substitution with another state of affairs (Anscombe and Ducrot 1977: 25, Rudolph 1996: 141, Abraham 1979: 92-94), as in ‘*He did not run upon the hill, but simply walked slowly and lazily following the rest of the group*’. This type of contrast is coded in German by *sondern*, in Spanish by *sino*, in Italian by *bensì*.
  4. The evolution of Spanish *pero* is slightly different from that of Italian *però*, even though their semantics is basically the same. In Spanish *pero* does not have the syntactic freedom that is typical of Italian *però* and always occurs in initial position (Corominas and Pascual 1997: 495-496, cf. also García 1999). Moreover, the development of Spanish *pero* did not go through the causal meaning ‘since’, which remained instead one of the main functions of *però* (*che*) in Italian until the 15<sup>th</sup> century (see Section 3.1).
  5. One of the earliest occurrences of *però* is found in the Ritmo Laurenziano (1180 ca.), in the form *peròe* and with the meaning ‘for that’ (see Spitzer 1951 for further discussion).
  6. According to Corominas and Pascual (1997: 495) and García (1999: 3856), the causal construction with *però che* is not found in Old Spanish texts and would thus be a specific development of Italian *però*.

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