Synchrony and Diachrony: introduction to a dynamic interface

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1. Introduction

The aim of this volume is to investigate the mutual relations between synchrony and diachrony, in order to shed light on their interface and to analyze the most adequate tools to describe and understand its manifestations.

That the two dimensions of language variation are closely intertwined is nothing new, although at different stages in the history of linguistics their relation has been overlooked, if not explicitly ignored (see section 2). However little effort has been made to provide a unitary account of their interface and, more importantly, little attention has been devoted to a systematic examination of the theoretical and methodological tools through which this interface can be better captured and analyzed. In this volume, we aim *i*) to put together a good sample of phenomena in which the synchrony-diachrony interface is crucial both at the descriptive and at the explanatory level, *ii*) to compare how different theoretical frameworks and different methodological tools may account for such interface phenomena, *iii*) to identify those factors that are more frequently at play in the interface between synchrony and diachrony.

Some manifestations of the synchrony-diachrony interface are widely recognized, as is the case of the relationship between gradualness in diachronic change and gradience in synchronic variation (see Traugott and Trousdale 2010). Others are more frequently investigated within one or the other domain of variation, though crucially implying both, such as multifunctionality patterns or constructions (cf. Cysouw 2007 and Goldberg 2006 for mainly synchronic perspectives, van der Auwera 2008 for a diachronic approach). We take as manifestations of the interface all those phenomena whose description and/or explanation cannot abstract from the dynamic relation between diachronic and synchronic variation (see section 3).

There are appropriate tools and models to examine each of these perspectives on language. However, as will be argued on the basis of the data collected in the volume, we believe that the synchrony-diachrony interface can be better captured and understood through those methodological tools that can be suitably applied to the synchronic as well as the diachronic dimension, such as semantic maps or constructional approaches (exemplified, respectively, in the chapters by van der Auwera and Trousdale). In other words, we argue that there are models that allow us to look at diachronic and synchronic phenomena through the same lenses, thus favouring the identification of the relationship between the two axes (see section 4).

The book addresses a number of crucial theoretical and methodological issues in the debate on diachrony and synchrony and provides evidence for the following:
  - how the study of language change can benefit from the most recent achievements in linguistic theories
  - how diachronic change can be driven by synchronically available options
  - how the explanations of synchronic variation may be found in diachronic processes
  - how synchronic variation can be the source for diachronic change
  - how diachronic gradualness and synchronic variation may be analyzed through the same lenses and by means of the same theoretical instruments.
  - how contact may shed light on both synchronic variation and diachronic gradualness

The focus of this volume is thus on the theoretical and methodological tools through which the interface between synchrony and diachrony can be described. The book is characterised by theoretical pluralism and openness, with papers adopting Construction Grammar, Generative Grammar and other frameworks to discuss the same theoretical issues. Being the focus of the volume, the topic of the interface will be explicitly addressed and discussed at the end of each

chapter, in a systematic and unitary reflection aimed at pushing our understanding of the synchrony-diachrony interface a step forward.

This introductory chapter is organized as follows: in section 2 we provide an overview of how the two notions of synchrony and diachrony have been analyzed in the literature, section 3 takes into account the main types of phenomena that may be considered as manifestations of the synchrony-diachrony interface, section 4 focuses on theoretical and methodological issues, examining those approaches and tools that may better capture interface phenomena, finally section 5 provides a brief summary of each chapter, underlining those respects in which every paper constitutes an original contribution to the overall debate on the relations between synchrony and diachrony.

2. Synchrony and diachrony: historical background

2.1 Setting the stage: the Saussurian dichotomies

Divergent views on the synchrony/diachrony relationship have characterized the linguistic thought of the 20th century.

In his ground-breaking *Cours de linguistique générale (CLG)*, Saussure's main interest was to defend the autonomy of the synchronic perspective and its centrality to the speaker. Saussure's definition of the fields of synchronic and diachronic linguistics clearly illustrates his position:

" La *linguistique synchronique* s'occupera des rapports logiques et psychologiques reliant des termes coexistants et formant système, tels qu'ils sont aperçus par la même conscience collective. La *linguistique diachronique* au contraire étudiera les rapports reliant des termes successifs non aperçus par une même conscience collective, et qui se substituent les uns aux autres sans former système entre eux" (CLG:140).

Saussure admits that "c'est dans la parole que se trouve le germe de tous les changements", however - he argues- " toutes les innovations de la parole n'ont pas le même succès, et tant qu'elles demeurent individuelles, il n'y a pas à en tenir compte puisque nous étudions la langue" CLG:138).

The separation between diachrony and synchrony and between *langue* and *parole* has characterized structural linguistics schools, especially as they developed in the United States. Generative linguistics is mainly concerned with competence as the object of investigation and considers language in use as only partially determined by grammatical knowledge. Moreover, according to generative linguistics language change takes place between grammars of different generations and is strictly limited by the innate language module (Croft 2003: 287). Fischer (2007: 82) concludes that the decision to concentrate on competence mainly led to variation simply being ignored. However it has to be recognized that recent formal models such as Minimalist theory and Optimality theory have shifted attention to variation in terms of micro-parameters and gradient distinctions (see below).

A major attempt at reconciling the two sides of the Saussurian dichotomy was made by European linguists under the approach of diachronic structuralism, which was concerned with the study of language change as result of the evolution of system-internal forces (Jakobson 1931, Martinet 1955, 1960). In Martinet's view the object of linguistic research is the study of conflicting forces of human communicative needs and tendency to minimal effort, which operate within the linguistic system in the strive toward a systemic equilibrium. However, in general little attention is given in European structuralist models to investigate individual variation and its origin in factors external to the linguistic system.

Other schools of thought have promoted a rich expansion of interests toward variation in space, in time and in social groups: this is the case of dialectology and linguistic geography, starting from Gilliéron (Gilliéron and Edmont 1902-1912). More recently, sociolinguistic work, which in the United States grew out of the sociology and ethnography of language, has focused on the study of

variation and has provided the theoretical and methodological tools to identify the locus of change and the means of its transmission (Weinreich, Labov and Herzog 1968, Labov 1972, 1994, 2001). In sociolinguistic models change is observed in progress within synchronic variation (e.g. through the apparent time model) and is embedded in the social context. Although these notions have strongly influenced the development of grammaticalization as a linguistic theory (Fischer 2007: 61), results from sociolinguistics research still have to be integrated with research on grammaticalization, as noted by Hopper and Traugott (2003: 30).

2.2. Grammaticalization: integrating the perspectives

A rethinking of the Saussurian dichotomy in the direction of full integration of synchrony and diachrony was actualized by research on grammaticalization. As Traugott and König (1991: 189) note: "The study of grammaticalization challenges the concept of a sharp divide between *langue* and *parole*, and focuses on the interaction of the two".
The strong interconnection of synchrony and diachrony is inherent in the notion of grammaticalization, since the theory of grammaticalization deals with diachronic processes of change which are conditioned by factors related to speakers, who necessarily operate at a synchronic level.

In grammaticalization studies various theoretical models and results have converged: results from historical linguistics, but also from functional typology and cognitive approaches to language.
The domain of grammaticalization studies has considerably expanded in terms of variety of languages from the earlier phases starting from Meillet's article (1912) until Lehmann's work (1982=1995) who outlined a systematization of the whole field proposing a number of parameters to describe and measure degrees of grammaticality of single elements. Other topics have attracted the interest of linguists working inside the grammaticalization framework. These include a growing interest in semantic change (Traugott and Dasher 2002) and in the pragmatic dimension of language, which had developed as an independent field, but soon intersected with grammaticalization studies (Brinton 1996) up to suggesting a systematic relationship between the pragmatic component and patterns of grammaticalization (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2010, Ghezzi and Molinelli forthcoming). As well, interests in typology and language universals, particularly in the perspectives opened by diachronic typology, were fruitful for work on grammaticalization. Grammaticalization processes indeed offer important evidence for diachronic typology to determine which variant is older and which is newer (Croft 2003: 272). Thus diachronic typologists use synchronic variation to add a dynamic dimension to typology. Furthermore in Croft's view (2003: 289) "the ultimate goal for the typological approach is to unify the study of all types of linguistic variation: cross-linguistic (synchronic typology) intralinguistic (sociolinguistics and language acquisition) and diachronic (diachronic typology and historical linguistics). What all these subdisciplines have in common is that they study linguistic variation, rather than abstracting away from it". Synchronic variation is pervasive: "grammaticalization, and language change in general, originates in the variation inherent in the verbalization of experience "(Croft 2010: 1).

In our opinion, it is the combination of synchronic variation, and its semantic-pragmatic motivation, on the one hand, and diachronic change resulting from variation and giving rise to further variation in turn, on the other hand, which represents the distinctive contribution of grammaticalization theory to the study of language change.

The domain of formal linguistics as well has seen some studies in which variation and gradience are taken into account: see the research by Roberts (1993) on the Romance future, and the study by Roberts and Roussou (2003) which attempts to incorporate the principles of grammaticalization into a Minimalist framework. The basic idea here is that grammaticalization is due to structural simplification and always involves a movement "upwards" to more abstract heads in the functional hierarchy. In this spirit, van Gelderen (2010) proposes that micro-steps in grammaticalization are conceptualized in terms of features in a Minimalist theory and suggests that language variation may be seen as feature variation. In the present volume the papers by Melissaropoulou, Wratil and Egedi

apply some versions of the generative model to the study of grammaticalization.

3. Manifestations of the synchrony-diachrony interface

In order to answer the question how the synchrony-diachrony interface manifests itself, we discuss in this section some of the phenomena that are more clearly identified as manifestations of the interface: gradience, gradualness, multifunctionality, analogy, contact-induced phenomena. These are phenomena that have been widely examined in the literature, so the aim of this section is not to discuss them in detail, but rather to highlight under what respects they can be considered manifestations of the interface.

Variation is a central issue, as argued in section 2 above: it appears that the synchrony-diachrony interface manifests itself basically in language variation. Without synchronic variation no change would be possible, and, in turn, without a diachronic perspective on variation, synchronic innovation and variability would not be understandable. In other words, variation implies a dynamic conception of language, which is exactly the property that we identify as the *locus* of the interface between synchrony and diachrony. *Gradience* implies synchronic variation, *gradualness* implies variation at every diachronic step, *multifunctionality* implies variation in the possible meanings and uses of a construction, *analogy* implies synchronic variation of constructions among which one is sufficiently frequent to constitute a model for the others and trigger a diachronic process towards levelling, *contact-induced phenomena* show synchronic variation between different languages in contact, which after a certain period of time triggers diachronic processes such as borrowing or analogical change. Let us discuss these issues in detail.

Gradience and gradualness are the notions that have been more widely discussed in the literature on synchrony and diachrony.

In the grammaticalization tradition there is a large degree of convergence on the notion of gradualness in that it is generally agreed that a form which is grammaticalizing typically loses its lexical properties over time rather than all at once (Trousdale this volume, Lehmann 1995); on the other hand there are also controversial discussions concerning the intersection of gradualness and gradience. Traugott and Trousdale (2010:20) say: "we do not consider diachronic processes themselves to be gradient. Rather, we argue that most instances of change involve small micro-steps that are in fact discrete and therefore abrupt (in a tiny way)". Trousdale (this volume) exemplifies how micro-changes in form and meaning may give rise to new grammatical and lexical constructions. He points out that each individual change is an abrupt reanalysis or "neo-analysis" out of which the appearance of gradualness arises. "Catastrophic changes" do not seem to have taken place: the well-known case of English modals, a paradigmatic example of catastrophic change for Lightfoot (1979), has been interpreted as a good example of grammaticalization path along a cline from full verbs to grammatical forms, with changes occurring in different verbs at different times (Hopper and Traugott 2003, Plank 1984, Fischer 2007).

The apparent contradiction between gradualness as an overall property of change and abruptness of micro-changes can be solved by focusing on the innovations introduced by the speaker. Trousdale (this volume) referring to the semanticization of the future inference in the development of the English *be going* future claims that "the point at which a future meaning is semanticized must be instantaneous (and not gradual) for the individual speaker/hearer". However there remains the difficulty of deciding when for the speaker/hearer something that is strongly implied, almost conventionally, becomes semanticized. Although it is reasonable to assume that there must be a dividing line between contextually-bound meanings and conventionalized semantic meanings and that frequency of occurrences can offer a reliable means to detect change, working with corpora of historical data implies that one cannot check the whole range of individual uses because patterns of distribution vary across speakers of the "same" language. Thus abruptness might be a theoretical assumption, but individuals are probably unaware of having passed the borderline.

Gradience is usually conceptualized as a synchronic notion, although it may also be understood

as the result of linguistic change. In Aarts's (2004: 5) view, gradience, defined as "the (perceived) interlacing of the categories of language systems", is restricted to boundaries between morphosyntactic categories and the organization of members within a category with more or less prototypical members. However, gradience is not limited to morphosyntactic categories, but pertains to semantic and functional overlap as well (Rosenbach 2010, Denison 2010, see also Magni, this volume). A diachronic perspective on gradience may be helpful in understanding language change, inasmuch as the diachronic emergence of a construction may result from patterns of distribution among speakers at the synchronic level and in terms of regional, social or contextual variation (see chapters by Currie, Voghera, De Vos, Semplicini and Rosenkvist & Skärlund). "Gradience is a natural consequence of a sequence of changes", as argued by Trousdale (this volume; see also the cases of noun modifiers in present-day English discussed in Rosenbach (2010) and of adnominal genitives in Latin discussed by Magni (this volume)). As shown by Magni, in Latin adnominal constructions the shift to postnominal genitives can be treated as a case of gradience in terms of synchronicallty overlapping constructions. Synchronic variation appears to be a factor steering language change toward the spread of N(oun)G(enitive) construction. The validity of the assumption of the deep intertwining of synchronic gradience and gradual change is confirmed.

Special attention is to be given to multifunctionality as a result of diachronic expansion and in this sense as a manifestation of the interface. Following Haspelmath (2003: 212), we use the term multifunctionality to describe the multiple *functions* of "grammatical morphemes", thus drawing a distinction between multifunctionality as a more general concept and polysemy (see here below on semantic maps as a methodological tool). Multifunctionality can lead to polysemy, traditionally defined as different senses of a single lexeme, but also, when there are no structural correlates for the meaning relationship at issue, to pragmatic ambiguity (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 101ff, Sweetser 1990, Tuggy 1993). The gradual nature of the distinction between ambiguity and vagueness allows for gradual rather than abrupt diachronic shifting from one category to the other (Tuggy 1993: 286). Several chapters in the volume account for multifunctional forms and discuss both their origin and the changes they undergo (see chapters by Voghera and van de Pol-Cuyckens).

Language contact as a trigger of language change has raised the interest of many linguists (Matras 2011). The impact of language contact and bilingualism on the lexical and grammatical structures of a given language has been exhaustively discussed in Heine and Kuteva (2003). They maintain that the transfer of grammatical meanings and structures across languages "is essentially in accordance with principles of grammaticalization, and that these principles are the same irrespective of whether or not language contact is involved" (Heine and Kuteva 2003: 1). There are however properties that allow researchers to distinguish replicated categories and their respective models from "normal" grammaticalization: replicated categories are less grammaticalized (used optionally and in fewer contexts) and also less frequent than the model category (for a discussion see Heine and Kuteva 2003: 119 and Fedriani, Manzelli and Ramat, this volume). Although certain processes are more likely to take place than others (e.g. grammatical forms for discourse reference, new forms for tense, aspect, modality), Heine and Kuteva affirm that data do not support conclusive evidence on whether there are linguistic structures that are more likely to be replicated than others. As to the main issue of the volume, we may note that contact between languages may extend over centuries and may produce both synchronic variation between old forms and forms taken from the model language, and diachronic change leading to the gradual spreading of the model language forms and meanings.

A case of replication of grammaticalization processes is provided by the evolution of possessive perfects in European languages (Heine and Kuteva 2003, Giacalone Ramat 2008). The construction *habēre + past participle*, of Latin origin, first spread through contact to Germanic languages, then more recently has gradually been extended to some European peripheral areas with a long history of contact with German: Sorbian, Czech and Slovenian (Breu 1996: 31); in these areas, however, the replica has not reached the same advanced stage of grammaticalization as the model language (Heine and Kuteva 2003: 101).

The distribution of contact-induced changes calls into question the areal dimension of grammaticalization: according to Heine and Kuteva (2011), there are areas of intense contact and widespread bilingualism where languages have undergone the same grammaticalization process as a result of contact: on a smaller scale Upper Sorbian and German, Molisean and Italian represent such minimal areas, but on a larger scale the spread of definite and indefinite articles to some Slavic languages or of definite articles in Pipil, an Uto-Aztecan language of El Salvador, provide evidence that new grammatical categories can be triggered or accelerated by language contact. In his study of Southern Italian dialects De Angelis provides further evidence of contact-induced changes in complement clause system.

To conclude, the cases discussed above, as well as other works presented in the relevant literature, nicely illustrate both synchronic variation and diachronic gradualness in the spread of contact-induced change.

Analogy is another manifestation of the interface: it typically operates at the synchronic level, but an investigation of the synchronic linguistic system from this point of view may explain the diachronic rise of a construction. It must be noted that the status of analogy in linguistic theory has received several interpretations: for Neogrammarians it was a process aiming to regularize irregularities in grammar especially at the morphosyntactic level, in grammaticalization theory it was conceived of as rule generalization, while for more recent (psycho)linguistic research analogy is a cognitive process playing a role both in language evolution and language learning and hence also in language change (Fischer 2007, 2011). The force of attraction exerted by a pattern over another depends on the frequency of the pattern itself.

Thus, clearly analogy involves the speaker-listener relationship and is deeply rooted in the communicative situations. Furthermore it may be based on concrete lexical items as well as more abstract schemas. A case in point is the loss of the impersonal construction with dative experiencer (of the type *him*-DAT *ofhreow þæs mannes* "he pitied the man") in the history of English: as shown by Trousdale (2010) the demise of this construction is associated with the spread via a process of grammaticalization of the more abstract and more entrenched macro transitive construction.

Several papers in this volume (see in particular the papers in PART ONE by Margerie, Disney , Melissaropoulou) show how considering analogy as a driving force of change helps to achieve a better understanding of what goes on in linguage change.

4. Focus on theoretical and methodological issues

Two issues have been raised in the previous sections that are crucial to a discussion on the possible theoretical and methodological approaches to the synchrony-diachrony interface: the role of grammaticalization studies highlighted in section 2 and the analysis of linguistic variation as the *locus* where the interface between synchrony and diachrony manifests itself, discussed in section 3. Language variation is the realization of the dynamism intrinsic to natural languages and it is thus reasonable to assume that theoretical approaches and methodologies accounting for linguistic variation are the most suitable to capture and describe the manifestations of the synchrony-diachrony interface.

As already discussed in section 2, a framework in which much attention has been paid to the diachronic consequences of synchronic variation is grammaticalization. In particular, in recent years the debate has focused on the factors triggering the first steps of language change, that is, on how language change starts out of synchronic variation. Besides the most recent developments of diachronic typology, as discussed by Croft (2010, see section 2), a promising research area comes from the exploitation of constructional approaches (Goldberg 1995, 2006), elaborated mostly on synchronic ground, to language change (see Bergs and Diewald 2008 for a detailed discussion on constructions and language change).

A constructionist view of language change focuses on the origin of new constructions, on the way in which new constructions come into being, taking performance (corpus) data as the object of analysis (Bergs and Diewald 2008: 5 and also chapters by Trousdale, Currie, Disney).

Constructional approaches show different degrees of formalization and provide slightly different definitions of constructions (see Traugott 2008: 25-26), but all consider grammar as a holistic notion, in which there is no dominant level, but semantics, morphosyntax, phonology, and pragmatics are all equally involved in forming a construction. Constructions may concern every level of grammar, in a view according to which all language is constructional (cf. Croft 2001, Fried and Östman 2004, Goldberg 2006), or they may be limited to cases where some non-compositionality can be identified, thus equating constructions to non predictable structures (e.g. Goldberg 1995).

Traugott (2008) proposes a hierarchical classification of construction types: she distinguishes between "macro-constructions", "meso-constructions", and "micro-constructions". "Macro-constructions" are higher-level constructions, more abstract and general, subsuming a higher number of tokens. "Meso-constructions" are mid-level constructions, implying a certain degree of abstractness but covering a lower number of tokens. Finally, "micro-constructions" are individual, basic constructions, which however cannot be equated to single occurrences, but remain 'types', though of a less abstract nature. Traugott calls actual utterances 'constructs'. This classification is clearly based on synchronic grounds, but its main interest lies in its suitability to mirror successive diachronic stages in the process of creation of a new construction, which starts as a micro-construction, may develop into a meso-construction and may finally end up as a macro-construction. This is certainly a challenge to the traditional idea that language change is not observable, and rather points to the need for a systematic observation of data, and secondly it requires new methodological tools for the analysis of language variation. Indeed, the availability of new corpora of written and spoken language has made it possible to gain insights on the emergence of new constructions and on the role of particular factors, such as frequency, in the development of new constructions.

Constructional approaches can be fruitfully applied to diachronic studies for a number of reasons. First, the fact that no neat division between semantics and pragmatics is drawn within constructional frameworks allows for accurate descriptions of the interrelations between semantic conventionalization and conversational implicatures (see also Traugott 2008, under this respect). Second, the unit of analysis of 'construction' is itself large enough to include what has been traditionally classified as context, providing the means to examine the contextual features underlying and triggering diachronic change. Third, as pointed out by Fried (2008: 74), constructions are abstractions and generalizations over constructs (individual occurrences) and as such presuppose "variation and change as an inherent part of grammar. Constructional specifications thus can change through the appearance of novel constructs, which invite novel interpretation of existing patterns". What appears to make diachronic construction grammar particularly suitable to describe the synchrony-diachrony interface is thus the fact that the same lenses and the same tools are employed in the study of language variation both in synchrony and diachrony, identifying the same factors at play in the storage of existing constructions and in the rise of new ones (see Croft 2001, Trousdale, this volume).

The framework just described is a theoretical one, though characterized by a high degree of internal differentiation, but it is also interesting to note that there are specific methodological and descriptive tools that have been elaborated for the analysis of synchronic phenomena and eventually revealed to be especially useful in the analysis of language change. The use of semantic maps is a case in point. This methodology has developed in the typological study of multifunctional forms, with the aim to account for the non-random, recurrent patterns of multifunctionality across languages. Semantic maps are crucially often built on the basis of synchronic data, but their explanation lies in the paths of semantic change through which the grams acquired (or lost) new functions. As argued by van der Auwera (2008, this volume) classical semantic maps, as opposed to semantic maps adopting a multi-dimensional scaling methodology (see Cysow 2007), are basically hypotheses about the polysemy of constructions. If semantic maps deal with more than one construction, they become hypotheses about synchronic variation and, as a consequence, about diachronic gradualness: structures do not develop new meanings randomly, but gradually, along

more or less ordered paths (cf. also Haspelmath 2003), which build what is synchronically observable as a semantic map.

In general, in order for the synchrony-diachrony interface to be observed, it is necessary to take into account usage-based data, or, in other words, to examine corpora, because it is in real use that language variation may emerge (see Rosenkvist and Skärlund, this volume). The analysis and comparison of synchronic and diachronic corpora, together with quantitative methodology, allows to observe, monitor and register synchronic variation at different stages of language history, thus revealing the respective roles of intra-linguistic variation, analogy, context and frequency in triggering language change. In particular, a relatively high frequency of occurrence, observable synchronically, seems to be crucial for allowing diachronic change. Indeed, the recourse to corpora analysis appears to be a characterizing feature of the present volume.

As pointed out by Bybee (Bybee 2006; cf. also Hopper and Traugott 2003: 126 –130), frequency appears to be a central aspect in the critical period during which speakers carry out a form-function reanalysis from the source value to the target value. At this stage, as shown by Mauri and Giacalone Ramat (2012: 230), the frequency of contexts compatible with both the original and the target meanings significantly increases, reaching at least 20% of the total amount of occurrences. In other words, in order for speakers to reinterpret the meaning of the form, it is necessary that they encounter the type of context in which such reinterpretation occurs with *sufficient frequency* for the construction to be processed as a single unit, and for the new value to be systematically associated with that specific context. Repetition and frequency of use in synchrony have an effect on the cognitive representations that speakers have of language and, more specifically, of particular constructions. The frequent association of a given context to a given meaning is likely to reinforce the conception of that context as encoding the new value, thus paving the way for the identification of a linguistic element in that context as the overt marker of that value, or for the reanalysis of the whole construction.

On the basis of the foregoing, it may be argued that the interface between synchrony and diachrony manifests itself both in the data, i.e. in how speakers use language and innovate structures, and in the linguist's perspective on data. As argued by Dryer (2006), it is indeed crucial to keep a synchronic description of language (what languages are like) apart from the mainly diachronic explanation of why languages are the way they are. What may *prima facie* appear to be a separation between the two dimensions is actually what allows for a real integration of synchrony and diachrony within a unitary account of language variation. The linguist's perspective captures diachronic phenomena that speakers are not aware of, since they do not need to know why the structures they use have specific properties in order to use them correctly. At the same time, however, it is precisely in the synchronic use that speakers make of language that the linguist identifies the seeds of language change, from which new structures emerge.

5. Overview of the contributions to the volume

The volume is organized in three thematic parts, which gather together papers sharing a common macro-perspective on the interface between synchrony and diachrony.

The first group of papers focuses on **the role of *analogy* and *constructions* in the synchrony-diachrony interface**, discussing cases of diachronic change driven by synchronically available options. The second part of the volume gathers together papers examining **synchronic variation as source and result of diachronic change**, thus discussing synchronic data and focusing on their being motivated or motivating language change. Finally, the third part of the volume is more centered on the role played by **gradualness in diachronic change**, grouping papers discussing to what extent diachronic change manifests itself as being gradual, providing data on particular situations of gradual change such as language contact.

In order to help readers in extracting the theoretical and methodological contribution of each paper to the general debate in the volume, every chapter ends with a short theoretical and methodological appendix, titled **'Focus on the dynamic interface between synchrony and diachrony'**, highlighting in what respects the case study discussed in the chapter provides evidence

for the issues raised in this Introductory paper.

In what follows, we will provide an overview of the contributions of the volume, based on their theoretical and methodological appendix, following their order in the Table of Contents.

Part One starts with a wide scope discussion by **Trousdale** on *Gradualness in language change: a constructional perspective*, aimed at outlining how a constructional approach to language change leads to a reconsideration of gradience and synchronic variation in terms of micro-steps at different levels of form-meaning pairings, thus proposing a model to integrate in a coherent account the perception of gradualness in language change and the abruptness of neoanalysis. Such a theoretical argument is supported by a qualitative analysis of corpora to track the development of the English preposition *during* from the verbal participle, showing how the neoanalyses involved combine to produce what appears to be a gradual change from a lexical towards a grammatical construction. Trousdale takes abrupt neoanalysis to be the primary mechanism through which language change takes place, arguing that even analogical thinking eventually implies a new analysis (i.e. neoanalysis) on the part of the language user. In his discussion, the synchrony-diachrony interface becomes visible when a detailed analysis of grammatical change and synchronic variation is undertaken, jointly addressing synchronic gradience (at any stage in the development of a particular language) and the various steps, which may explain the change occurred and at the same time may set up further possibilities for future change in the language network.

Currie's chapter *Gradual change and continual variation: the history of a verb-initial construction in Welsh* explores the relationship between synchrony and diachrony both from an empirical and theoretical perspective. The core of the article is an empirical, corpus-based case study of the development of a verb-initial construction, Absolute-initial verb (AIV) order, in Early Modern Welsh. The research stems from the observation that in Middle Welsh a systematic variation between prose and poetry is attested: AIV order is rare in prose but common in poetry. The variation in Middle Welsh appears to be at the same time the result of an earlier diachronic change, with the more frequent AIV order in poetry probably reflecting a more conservative order, and the input for later diachronic change. The association of AIV order with prestigious poetic style may have motivated some Early Modern Welsh writers to extend the use of AIV order in prose. The theoretical discussion in the article, on the other hand, focuses on the debate over the *discrete vs. gradual* nature of syntactic change and discusses the paradox that observable changes in language use seem gradual but some models of syntactic change (e.g. Principles and Parameters approaches) see it as transitions from one discrete category to another, thus pointing to abruptness. Currie contrasts Willis' (1998) discrete Principles and Parameters analysis of the development of AIV order in Early Modern Welsh with a gradual Construction Grammar-based account, arguing that the dynamic conception of grammar in Construction Grammar, being usage-based and having a gradient conception of grammaticality, enables it not only to model gradual change but also to integrate sociolinguistic/stylistic variation directly in its analysis.

Margerie (Can you literally be scared sick? *The role of analogy in the rise of a network of Resultative and Degree Modifier constructions*) investigates two micro-constructions NP1 SCARE NP2 SICK / NP BE (LITERALLY) SCARED SICK in the light of comparable diachronic changes (Margerie 2011). The study relies on a sample of 70 occurrences of the constructions mainly retrieved through Internet investigations. Within the constructional framework adopted by the author, cases of mismatch, i.e. form-function mappings that are incongruent with respect to some general patterns, are crucial for the development of a novel interpretation. The case under study reveals an unexpected pattern of change in that the data examined suggest that the degree meaning was historically the first to emerge and the resultative construction was later modelled analogically on other closely related constructions like NP1 VB NP2 TO DEATH, whose resultative meaning was the source of development of the high degree meaning in that case (Margerie 2011). The theoretical

significance of this paper lies in the fact that it directs the focus of attention on analogical thinking as the motivation for the rise of the new meaning and points to a case of "emerging innovation" driven by context-dependent meanings.

Disney takes into account the role of constructions and analogy in the development of the 'hearsay' value of *BE meant to* (***The reputed sense of BE meant to: a case of gradual change by analogy***). Based on corpus data, he compares *BE meant to* to other verbs attested in the NCI (*nominativus cum infinitivo*) construction (e.g. *BE said to, BE supposed to*) with a reputed sense and shows that BE *meant to* has come to be interpreted as an instantiation of the hearsay NCI schema by a process of analogy. Disney provides a detailed discussion on the role of abstract schemas and constructions in language change, arguing that in the case under exam analogy with the NCI schema may explain what appears to be a non-gradual step in the diachronic change, if compared to the established conceptual space for evidentiality. Namely, the development of hearsay BE *meant to* does not follow the gradual path *obligation > expectation > general reputation > hearsay* (Anderson 1986: 284)*,* as other verbs like SAY/BELIEVE do, but rather appears to jump from expectation to hearsay. Disney argues that this is due to the more abstract and general meaning of the NCI schema, which does not really distinguishes between 'general reputation' and 'hearsay', and has directly attracted the BE *meant to* construction without the need to express contiguous nodes.

Melissaropoulou's chapter (***Gradualness in analogical change as a complexification stage in a language simplification process: a case study from Modern Greek dialects***) sets out to verify the hypothesis that dialectal variation documented by morphological phenomena represents different stages in the general process of grammar simplification. Data from some Modern Greek dialectal varieties (Lesvian and Aivaliot, Pontic, Livisi and Silli, the last four belonging to the group of Asia Minor dialects spoken in Turkey until the exchange of populations in 1923) show different kinds of levelling in nominal inflection always going in the same direction of greater simplicity in the paradigmatic relations and resulting in the shift of nouns of one declension into another, in case syncretism and in a restriction of nominal paradigms with respect to the Classical period. The tendency to cross-paradigmatic levelling reveals the strong role of gradual analogical processes, but at the same time shows that alternations that are marked (i.e. further complicate the system) are more likely to be eliminated, thus verifying predictions on optimal paradigms (Mc Carthy 2005). Temporary complexification phenomena are attested and are treated as intermediate cases of analogical levelling.

Although the data of the study are synchronic, results shed light on the way synchronic variation can constitute not only the source, but also the consequence of diachronic change.

The first chapter of **Part Two** is by **van der Auwera** and discusses ***Semantic maps, for synchronic and diachronic typology***, addressing the ways in which classical semantic maps (as opposed to statistical, multidimensional semantic maps) may be useful descriptive tools for catching the interface between synchrony and diachrony, especially showing how synchronic variation may be analyzed as the result of diachronic change. A classical semantic map is basically a hypothesis about the polysemy of constructions. Therefore, when a semantic map deals with more than one construction, it also contains a hypothesis about synchronic variation. Through its adjacency requirement, according to which the semantic potential of any construction has to be located on a connected stretch of map points, in such a way that every gram or construction has to cover adjacent points on the map, the hypothesis becomes predictive and falsifiable. Van der Auwera argues that the synchronic variation described in a classical semantic map directly relates to diachronic gradualness: polysemous grams or constructions cover adjacent areas in the map because meanings do not develop randomly, but they follow specific paths and they do it gradually, so when grams or constructions develop new functions, they move from one map point to an adjacent one, without allowing for shortcuts. The paper shows that a diachronically interpreted semantic map is the account of such semantic paths and clarifies this view through a comparison with a different type of semantic map, namely the statistical semantic map. This map has different properties and lacks the

adjacency requirement. As a consequence, it also lacks the ensuing predictive power, both with respect to synchrony and diachrony, and cannot make the interface between synchrony and diachrony visible.

Magni's paper (***Synchronic gradience and language change in Latin genitive constructions***) contributes to the ongoing theoretical debate on the relation of synchronic gradience and gradual language change as witnessed in Traugott and Trousdale (2010). The paper transfers the question of constructional gradience in adnominal constructions, as discussed from a typological point of view by Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2004) and from a diachronic point of view for English by Rosenbach (2006, 2010) to Latin adnominal constructions. Adnominal constructions in Latin involve both adnominal genitives (*tribunus militum*) and attributive modification (*tribunus militaris*). Such encoding strategies show overlaps, gradually shifting boundaries and interpretational ambiguities that have paved the way to the gradual ousting of the adjective by the genitive. In a broader typological perspective the increasing frequency of constructs with N(ominative)G(enitive) order and their expansion in the domain of denominal adjectives throughout the history of Latin leads to the loss of the GN order and contributes to establish the new SVO typology of the Romance languages. As to the theoretical significance of this contribution, it may be said that considering gradualness as the historical counterpart of gradience can help to shed light to the dynamic exchanges between diachrony and synchrony.

Wratil's study (***Double Agreement in the Alpine Languages. An Intermediate Stage in the Development of Inflectional Morphemes***) provides a description and diachronic analysis of the evolution of subject pronouns from subject clitics to agreement markers in three sets of Alpine dialects: Carinthian and Bavarian varieties in the first part, Walser varieties in the second and the Badiot variety of Ladin in the third. Double agreement phenomena have been often noted as a characteristic feature of a number of Germanic and Romance varieties. Wratil claims that the motivations of this allomorphy can be traced back to language learners decisions in face of morphosyntactic ambiguities of the input. According to the framework of Principles and Parameters adopted here, learners apply economy principles and strategies during the process of acquisition "which may enable them to assign the optimal morphosyntactic representation to their own linguistic experience", namely the most specific forms, the least costly syntactic derivations and the least redundant representations. Double agreement effects are shown to indicate more or less persistent intermediate stages in the grammaticalization process and also distinct paths of dialectal evolution which can be tied to conflicting requirements of production and comprehension optimalization. Moreover contact has to be taken into account as factor of change: Southern Walser German speakers, especially the younger generations, have borrowed basic word order patterns from Italian and reanalyzed subject clitics into agreement markers, but at the same time exhibit properties that still fit in the traditional V2 scheme. In a functional approach Dal Negro (2004) and Giacalone Ramat (2007) claim that the agreement suffixes derived from clitic subjects have introduced a complexification of the conjugational system for the 3SG now showing gender distinctions. The abandonment of this distinction in favour of the neuter affix for all 3SG subjects seems a simplification tendency due to speakers of younger generations .

The paper illustrates dialectal variation in synchrony and in diachrony (intergenerational variation) showing how synchronically available options may rise and evolve in order to optimize grammars.

The contribution by **De Vos** (***On variation in gender agreement: the neutralization of pronominal gender in Dutch***) investigates the ongoing reanalysis of gender in the use of pronouns in Southern Dutch varieties. The traditional three-gender system (*hij, zij, het*) based on the lexical gender of the antecedent is being replaced by a new semantically motivated use of pronouns. The loss of morphological distinctions in nominal system renders the traditional gender marking increasingly opaque causing structural ambiguity. The results of this study have revealed some properties of

transitional gender systems. In particular, the paper analyzes pronominal reference to inanimate controllers in informal speech and proposes interesting similarities with gender restructuring and loss in English. Both pragmatic factors, such as discourse prominence of controllers, and syntactic factors, such as antecedents in subject position, play a role in the preservation of grammatical agreement. The results for Southern Dutch also suggest that neuter pronouns are developing toward default pronouns in cases where grammatical agreement fails. The author concludes that the use of gender-marked pronouns can be described in terms of salience: either "relative salience as an individual" or "discourse salience".

The paper offers a good case study for a better understanding of the mechanisms of gradual spread of change and a significant contribution to the issue of synchronic variation as cause of change.

Semplicini's paper (***Synchronic Variation and Grammatical Change: The Case of Dutch double gender nouns***) is complementary to the preceding study by De Vos. In order to fill a gap in gender studies, Semplicini sets out to investigate double gender nouns in Dutch, i.e. nouns which are attested with internal common and neuter gender exponents. Results confirm the gradual loss of grammatical gender in favour of a more semantic system, but also individuate a number of features which help explaining the persistence of the phenomenon down the centuries. The synchronic investigation shows that double gender nouns represent an area of the lexicon which is characterized by strict interconnections between items sharing two main properties, i.e. lexical gender instability and semantic similarity. The diachronic investigation confirms the remarkable fluctuation of the area and also the constant presence of networks of similar concepts expressed by near-synonyms which may also include loanwords and neologisms. An example of a semantic network of near-synonyms is offered by *steen (de/het)* "stone, as a natural/artificial substance" and related items .

The paper discusses interesting data and offers criteria to disentangle the apparently random fluctuation in the nominal domain; it also highlights the deep relationship of synchronic variation and diachronic perspectives on the gradual loss of grammatical gender in Dutch.

The two chapters by Voghera and Rosenkvist & Skärlund discuss very similar phenomena, focusing respectively on the parallel taxonomic lexemes *tipo* in Italian and *typ* in Swedish. **Voghera**'s chapter (***A Case study on the Relationship between Grammatical Change and Synchronic Variation: the Emergence of tipo[-N] in Italian***) describes the great synchronic variation in the use of *tipo* in Italian (Eng. *type*), which has developed numerous non-nominal uses, by comparing it to similar uses of taxonomic nouns in other European languages and inquiring to what extent such synchronic variation reflects diachronic development. She makes three crucial points. First, the complex path of grammaticalization of *tipo* led to the development of new expressions for vagueness and approximation in Italian, as the qualitative analysis of corpora shows. However, the development of *tipo*$_{[-N]}$ is not the result of a linear change in which the nominal function was replaced by different functional categories, but it shows a process where new functions and meanings coexist with the old ones in a *layering* situation. Second, the distribution of the various non-nominal uses of *tipo* varies in relation to textual and register dimensions, with non-nominal uses being more frequent in spoken texts, especially in dialogues. This provides a crucial key to understand the triggering of the change. Third, differences between specific instances of *tipo* can be described in terms of prototypical vs. less prototypical realization of categories, rather than in terms of intercategorial gradience.

Rosenkvist & Skärlund's chapter (***Grammaticalization in the present- the changes of Modern Swedish* typ)**) describes a very similar situation, by tracking the changes of Swedish *typ*, from noun to preposition, adverb and finally to discourse particle, accounting both for the attested synchronic variation and for the underlying diachronic change. Until about 1930, *typ* was only attested with a nominal function, and it is only recently that the other functions have developed. The authors

hypothesize that the source of the prepositional *typ* is most likely to be traced back to the use within the Swedish air force, as data extracted from corpora seem to show. The study focuses on the role of syntax in diachronic change and stresses the importance of using relatively recent corpus data in grammaticalization studies in order to capture correctly the process of change.

Part Three is mainly concerned with analyses of gradualness in language change and is opened by the chapter by **van de Pol and Cuyckens** on ***Gradualness in change in English (augmented) absolutes.*** This paper seeks to explain the prominence in Present-day English of *with*-augmented absolutes (an example from Present-day English is: *With* the teacher refusing to comply, *Barry took the matter to the dean*) with respect to unaugmented absolute constructions and the lack of other types of augmented absolutes (such as *after*-augmented absolute constructions, for instance), adopting a diachronic perspective. The study is based on corpus data of the Middle and Modern English period and integrates the diachronic overview with synchronic variation in Old English and Present-Day English as described in the existing literature. The authors hypothesize that the current synchronic situation is the result of context expansion (and in particular of host-class expansion and semantic-pragmatic context expansion), following Himmelmann's view (2004, 2005) on grammaticalization, and further argue that this particular development is in keeping with the general process of grammatical constructionalization (see Trousdale, this volume).

The topic of **Egedi**'s study (***Grammatical encoding of referentiality in the history of Hungarian***) is the emergence of the new grammatical category of the definite article in the history of Hungarian. The data analyzed concern the Late Old Hungarian and Middle Hungarian periods and fill a gap in our knowledge of the Hungarian language. This study relies on a traditional philological work based on the Gospel of Matthew from the Munich codex with occasional checking against a larger amount of texts. In the period under examination the marking of the semantic definiteness is almost obligatory, so the definite article derived from the reanalysis of the demonstrative appears in every case when referential identification is not encoded otherwise. The process of reanalysis appears to be similar to the reanalysis of Latin *ille* in Romance languages and can be accounted for in terms of the principles of the Minimalist syntax (Head Preference Principle). Egedi's study systematically examines the regular absence of definite articles in Old Hungarian, in cases where the semantic and pragmatic criteria for definiteness seem to hold, but the article is absent because other devices (e.g. a demonstrative modifier) allow to identify the noun phrase reference. The major types of nominal expressions considered are: proper names, nouns modified by a demonstrative, generic readings and possessive constructions, all cases in which the article is obligatory in Modern Hungarian. Expansion in the use of the article did not happen all at once, as shown by the contrastive analysis of a parallel Gospel text of a later date. The process during which the article use expanded to almost every pattern embodying a definite description is characterized by gradualness and realized through micro-steps in the spirit of Traugott & Trousdale (2010).

Fedriani, Manzelli and Ramat's chapter, ***Gradualness in contact-induced constructional replication: the Abstract Possession construction in the Circum-Mediterranean area***, investigates the emergence, the diachronic spread and the resulting areal distribution of the so-called *Abstract Possession construction* in the Circum-Mediterranean area. In this construction, lexical and structural means usually exploited to express concrete possession are used to denote personal feelings of the type "to be thirsty" or abstract states such as "to be right, wrong". The study follows the gradual spread of the *Abstract Possession construction* with *habēre* in Latin, and its competition with the old Indo-European Dative construction of the *mihi est*-type. The *habēre* construction is typically present in nearly all Romance languages as Latin inheritance, and also in other languages of the Mediterranean area such as Greek, Bulgarian, Albanian, Maltese, Turkish. In this second group of languages the construction may be interpreted as an instance of contact-induced replication (with Italian as the model language), showing the features that distinguish replicated categories from their models (Heine and Kuteva 2003). The authors claim that the replicated construction

seems to be more grammaticalized in geographically closer languages than in languages spoken at some distance from the centre of innovation. They also explore paths of polysemic extension and suggest a semantic hierarchy *physical feelings > mental feelings* along which the construction was extended in different languages. As a matter of fact, the Abstract Possession construction preferably tends to instantiate feelings pertaining to bodily functions such as hunger or sleep, and to subsequently spread to other, less prototypical domains: in the replica languages, abstract states like age and hurry are more resistant to this structure.

The data analyzed provide evidence in support of the claim that language change is usually the result of earlier synchronic variation. The paper also addresses the issue of gradualness in the grammaticalization of contact-induced transfers and of gradual extension both in space and time suggesting some patterns of areal lexical typology.

The last paper of the volume is **De Angelis'**s chapter on ***"Binding Hierarchy" and peculiarities of the verb "potere" in some Southern Calabrian varieties***. After describing the strategies attested for complement clauses in Extreme Southern dialects of Italy (complement clauses with the infinitive, with MODO + indicative, and with *ca/chi* +indicative), the author exemplifies how dependent finite clauses headed by MODO/QUOD replace the infinitive especially in contexts where the main predicate is a verb expressing will, wish, aim or intention. This phenomenon has been analyzed as a syntactic calque from Italo-Greek varieties, however in Southern Calabrian varieties such replacement goes further and is also attested after the verb *potere* 'can', thus pointing to a change in the type of modality (from event-oriented to proposition-oriented modality). The author examines the contexts where *potere* occurs in the main clause and provides an explanation for why verbs expressing will or wish constitute the core of predicates which occur with MODO/QUOD + indicative, showing how contact-induced language change, once triggered, may continue along its own way and gradually lead to innovations.

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