On the origins of scalar particles in Italian

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In this paper the Italian scalar particles perfino and addirittura are investigated in a diachronic perspective, from their origins in spatial and temporal meanings to the scalar value they have in Present Day Italian. The data documenting the shift are discussed in section 2, where it is argued that the lexical semantics of the particles pays a crucial role in constraining the contexts in which they appear, and hence their change. Section 3 defines the evolution of Italian scalar particles as an instance of subjectification, i.e. as an increased degree of encoding of the Speaker’s attitude, and considers the syntactic evolution of both perfino and addirittura as the structural reflection of the subjectification process that they undergo at the semantic level. Section 4 addresses the question of whether the development of perfino and addirittura is a case of grammaticalization, reconsidering the definition of both the concept of grammaticalization and its relationship to subjectification. Section 5 concludes and points out at some directions of further research work.

1. Introduction

The phenomena addressed in this article have attracted linguists’ attention in the past fifteen years only, and almost exclusively in a synchronic perspective.¹ In Italian, in particular, to my knowledge, the diachrony of scalar focus particles such as perfino, persino and addirittura “even” has never been previously investigated.² Yet the history of such particles raises some interesting questions, both semantically and syntactically. This paper offers an account of the origins and development of addirittura and perfino³ and evaluates the implications of the results for a theory of semantic change. These particles originate in spatial and temporal meanings and later acquire scalar meaning. The approach adopted is a “diachronic pragmatic” one (in the sense of Jacobs and Jucker 1995: 13): the change is shown to arise via contiguity, through the frequent association of the lexemes with a set of specific contexts. Three theoretical points are touched upon. The first issue concerns the role of the lexical semantics of the expressions in the change. A more general reflection is invited on the relationships between lexical semantics and morphosyntactic contexts in ‘inducing’ semantic change. Secondly, the evolution of these particles is shown to be an instance of subjectification, as it involves an increase in the encoding of the Speaker’s attitude. In particular, the history of perfino and addirittura allows us to formulate some new hypotheses about the syntactic counterpart of subjectification, ultimately leading to a reflection on the definition of subjectification itself. Thirdly, the evolution of scalars poses some interesting questions concerning the definition of the concept of grammaticalization. The following three sections focus, respectively, on the history of Italian scalar particles (section 2), subjectification (section 3), grammaticalization (section 4).
2. The evolution of Italian scalar particles

Present Day Italian *perfino* and *addirittura* are additive scalar focus particles, like English *even*, their focus “relates the value of the focused expression to a set of alternatives” (König 1991a: 32). Thus, (1):

(1) È venuto perfino/addirittura Matteo.
‘Even Matteo came’

besides entailing: “Matteo came”, presupposes: “Other people came” (*additive* component) and presents Matteo as the most unlikely or unexpected entity on a scale of people more or less likely to come (*scalar* component). Although both roughly equivalent to English *even*, subtle differences in distribution and value distinguish *perfino* and *addirittura*: the former is more frequently found as a DP-modifier, the latter as a VP-modifier; *perfino* is felt as more “neutral” by native speakers, *addirittura* as “stronger” (such distinctions are specified in Visconti in preparation; cf. section 2.2; Visconti 2004).

Neither particle contained such an evaluative component in its original semantics. The first occurrence of Old Italian *a dirittura* (literally “in a straight line”) dates from the XIV century (2). The “adverb” has here both spatial and temporal value: “direttamente, per la via diretta; senza esitazione, senza indugio” (GDLI) ‘directly, without hesitation, straight’:

(2) Nel detto anno sentendo la congiura, / che fer per rubellarsi i Ferraresi / da Santa Chiesa, contro a dirittura / Cardinal Pelagru co’ Bolognesi / vi corse

(3) Andò poi addirittura alla rocca Sansimone e assediolla e minacciò di disfarla (Andrea da Barberino, 249, Florence, 1370-1431 [GDLI]).
‘He then went directly/straight to the Sansimone fortress and besieged it and threatened to destroy it’.

In these examples *a dirittura* is neither scalar nor additive: it does not refer to a paradigm, a set of alternatives for which the proposition is valid, nor does it induce an ordering in such a set, by presenting the constituent as ‘unlikely’ or ‘unexpected’ according to the speaker’s evaluation, as Present Day Italian *addirittura* does.

*Perfino* (per “through” + fine “end”) originates as a preposition with telic value, i.e. denoting extension to an end-point, both temporal (4) and spatial (5). In the XIV century, like *a dirittura, perfino* is neither scalar nor additive:

(4) la quale [pace] li fu concessa perfino a calendì maggio 1304, e poi prolungata per uno anno (D. Compagni, Cronica, 3-4, -1324 [LIZ]).
‘Peace was conceded until May 15th 1304, and then extended for a year’.

(5) In su un gran destrier montò il barone, il quale tutto d’acciaio era coperto,/di piastra in piastra perfino al tallone (La Spagna, -1380 [GDLI]).
‘A big horse was mounted by the baron, who was all covered in steel/plate after plate through to his heel’.

To summarize:

**Table 1. The evolution of Italian focus scalar particles**

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<tr>
<th>Old Italian</th>
<th>Present Day Italian</th>
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To account for the shift from the spatial and temporal value in Old Italian to the scalar value in Present Day Italian, I propose a “diachronic micro-pragmatic” approach: the change arises via contiguity, through the frequent association of the lexemes with a set of specific contexts. In such contexts the item introduced by perfino/addirittura is presented as either (or both): (i) ‘special’, ‘extreme’, which I argue to be at the origin of the scalar component; (ii) the member of a set of alternatives, which I argue to be at the origin of the additive component. The step-by-step process in the evolution of each particle will be outlined in the following section.

2.1. Contexts favoring the development

2.1.1. A dirittura

For the whole XV century, a dirittura is both spatial and temporal (see section 2.2.), as in (6), in which the adverb modifies the verb pervenire ‘to attain’ indicating motion to an end:

(6) Montano adunque lieto ponendo una viva selce ne la rete della sua fronda, e con tutta la sua forza rotandolasi intorno al capo, la lasciò andare. La quale furiosamente stridendo pervenne a dirittura ove mandata era (Sannazaro, Arcadia, 11, 1481-1496 [LIZ]).

‘So Montano happily placing a living stone in the net of his sling, and with all his strength whirling it around his head, let it go. Which [the stone] screeching furiously landed exactly/straight where it was aimed’.

The first occurrence in a marked, emphatic, context is in the XVI century. In (7), the Speaker is arguing for the need to finish the war quickly. This, he says, “cannot be done otherwise than by going directly/straight to fight the enemy […] which is so dangerous that it could not be said that to proceed in this way is not most foolhardy and imprudent”. We find both the reference to a set of alternatives that are discarded: “il che non si può fare altrimenti che…” ‘which cannot be done otherwise than by …’, and the presentation by the co-text of the chosen alternative as ‘extreme’ (“tanto pericolosa… somma temerità e imprudenza” ‘so dangerous… most foolhardy and imprudent’). The predicate is still of motion: andare a combattere ‘to go to fight’, yet open to a more abstract interpretation, in which a dirittura modifies the whole complex predicate and not just the ‘go’ verb:

(7) ... in verità molte ragioni ci confortano a non l’accettare... Ma i termini ne’ quali è ridotta Novara e la rocca, dove non è da vivere pure per un giorno, ci costringono, se la vogliamo soccorrere, ad assaltare gl’inimici subitamente; e quando pure, lasciandola perdere, pensiamo a trasferire in altra parte dello stato di Milano la guerra, la stagione del verno che si appropinqua, molto incomoda a guerreggiare in questi luoghi bassi e pieni d’acqua [...] la carestia grandissima de’ danari per la quale è impossibile il mantenerci qui lungamente, ci necessitano, non accettando l’accordo, a cercare di terminare presto la guerra: il che non si può fare altrimenti che andando a dirittura a combattere con gl’inimici. La qual cosa, per le condizioni loro e del paese, è tanto pericolosa che e’ non si potrà dire che il procedere in questo modo non sia somma temerità e imprudenza: perché l’alloggiamento loro è tanto forte per natura e per arte [...] i luoghi circostanti [...] sono si opportuni alla difesa loro e si bene muniti, il paese [...] è si difficile a cavalcare, che chi desegna d’andare distesamente a trovargli [...] non cerca altro che
d'avventurarsi con grandissimo e quasi certissimo pericolo (F. Guicciardini, Storia d'Italia, 1537-1540 [LIZ]).

“But the state to which Novara and the fort have been reduced force us, if we want to help them, to assault the enemy immediately; and even when, abandoning them, we think of transferring the war to another part of the State of Milan, the Winter season which is approaching, greatly hindering warmaking in these flat areas full of water … the severe lack of funds which means it is impossible to stay here for long, force us, if we don’t accept the agreement, to try and finish the war quickly: which could not be done otherwise than by going directly/straight to fight the enemy. Which, given the condition both of them and the country, is so dangerous that it could not be said that to proceed in this way is not most foolhardy and imprudent: because’…

This kind of context, in which the constituent modified by a dirittura is presented as the member of a set of alternatives and as the ‘extreme’ member of the set, radically increases in frequency in the XVIII century. In (8), the first character suggests a kind of behaviour: “let us treat him with indifference”, to which the second character opposes a more radical behaviour: “let us charge him”, modified by a dirittura:

(8) /ORAZ./Colui che di là viene, non è egli Fabio? /RID:/Sì, è desso; che pretende, l’audace? /ORAZ./Non vi riscaldate subito, amico; prendiamo la cosa con indifferenza a principio, e vegghiamo quale idea fo conduca. /RID./ Attacchiamolo a dirittura, alla militare. /ORAZ./No, sarebbe soverchieria attaccarlo in due. Fate a modo mio, trattiamolo con disinvoltura (C. Goldoni, L’impostore, At. 2, sc. 15, 1754 [LIZ]).

‘/ORAZ./Do not get hot, my friend; let us treat him with indifference to start with, and let us see what brings him here. /RID/ Let us charge him straight away, like soldiers’.

In (9), the different kinds of revengeful acts that the character is threatening to commit are ordered to the extreme one: “I’ll kill her”, modified by a dirittura:

(9) /FAB./Nipote, io son tradito. Nipote mia, son morto. Vo’ che colei perisca, e che mi paghi il torto […] Perfida, disgraziata. La vo’ scarnificare […] Se vien, se mi risponde… l’ammazzo a dirittura (C. Goldoni, La donna di governo, At. 2, sc. 15, 1758 [LIZ]).

‘Evil bitch. I’m going to strip the flesh off her […] If she comes, if she answers me… I’ll kill her straight away/even kill her’.

Similarly, in (10), there is a contextually induced ranking from “fall in love”, to “flirt” to “marry”, the last one, modified by a dirittura, being the “highest” member of the set:

(10) /MIRAND./ Uh, che mai ha detto! L’eccellentissimo signor marchese Arsura mi sposerebbe? E pure se mi volesse sposare, vi sarebbe una piccola difficoltà. Io non lo vorrei. Mi piace l’arrosto, e del fumo, non so che farne. Se avessi sposati tutti quelli, che hanno detto volermi, oh, averei pure tanti mariti! Quanti arrivano a questa locanda, tutti di me s’innamorano, tutti mi fanno i cascamorti; e tanti, e tanti mi esibiscono di sposarmi a dirittura (C. Goldoni, La locandiera, At. 1, sc. 9, 1753 [LIZ]).

‘Those who get to this inn, they all fall in love with me, they all flirt with me, and many and many boast to even marry me’.

My hypothesis is that a dirittura, because of its frequent occurrence in contexts such as (7) to (10), gradually ‘absorbed’ this evaluative component, regularly associated to its presence. Notice the shift from verbs inherently of motion: “correre” ‘to run’ (2), “andare” ‘to go’ (3), “pervenire” ‘to come’ (6), to non-motion verbs: “ammazzare” ‘to kill’ (9), “sposare” ‘to marry’ (10) – parallel to the transition from the directional use to a scalar one in which the directionality is no longer present. A clear index that the scalar/evaluative component has been ‘absorbed’ by the lexeme and is no longer an inference induced by the context is when the lexeme is no longer redundant in the utterance. In all the preceding examples it is still possible to omit a dirittura without altering the meaning; from the XVIII century onwards the elimination becomes more difficult: even though a dirittura does not contribute to the truth-conditional value of the utterance, the change in meaning provoked by its omission is perceivable, as in shown by (11), which becomes odd if a dirittura is omitted (11’):
Gli uomini in certi incontri son tutti amici nostri; Ma quando che si tratta d’usarci un’ingiustizia, Per farci disperare han l’arte e la malizia. Se comandassero donne, son certa e son sicura, Che saria condannato il Duca a dirittura. Ma nelle man degli uomini il comandar ridotto, Vogliono che sian sempre le femmine al di sotto (C. Goldoni, Il padre per amore, At. 2, sc. 2, 1757 [LIZ]).

Men, in certain encounters are our best friends. But when it comes to do us an injustice, To make us suffer they have the art and the malice. If women were in power, I am most sure, the Duke himself/even the Duke would be convicted’.

Se comandassero donne, son certa e son sicura, Che saria condannato il Duca.

‘If women were in power, I am most sure, the Duke would be convicted’.

Interestingly, the directional spatial-temporal meaning gradually disappears (perhaps ousted by the competing direttamente ‘directly’: cf. section 2.2). The latest examples, according to the LIZ, date to the XIX century (notice the bonding of a dirittura in addirittura: cf. section 4):

Don Abbondio […] fece i più sviscerati complimenti all’innominato, e lo pregò che volesse scusarlo con monsignore; chè lui doveva tornare alla parrocchia addirittura, per affari urgenti (A. Manzoni, Promessi sposi, 15, 1840 [LIZ]).

‘Don Abbondio […] begged him to excuse him with monsignor, ‘cause he had to go straight back to the parish, for some urgent business’.

In the XX century 76/76 examples out of the LIZ database are non directional, scalar ones, while dictionaries define the “direttamente, senza esitazione” sense (‘directly, without hesitation’) as “obsolete” (cf. GRADIT).

2.1.2. Perfino

Throughout the whole XIV century perfino acts as a preposition with directional value to an end-point; this end-point is usually quite conventional, as in (13) “till morning”:

Dentro in un bosco, ch’è quivi vicino, t’imbosca e sta perfino al mattutino (La Spagna, -1380 [GDLI]).

‘In a wood, which is near here, hide yourself in the wood and stay until morning’.

The first examples in which this end-point is presented by the co-text as ‘extreme’ date to the XV century: a superlative: “perfino ai più segreti luoghi” ‘to the most secret places’ in (14), “perfino alla morte” ‘until death’ in (15), “chi parte … perfino al dente” ‘some he cut through to the tooth’ in (16):

Ragione vòle che non senza grande vizio si subito odio nasca, ch’io serri l’uscio testé a chi poco fa era libero addito a me perfino ai più segreti luoghi (L. B. Alberti, Libri della famiglia 4, 1433-41 [LIZ]).

‘Reason requires that not without great vice such sudden hatred is born that I now shut the door on whom very recently had free access to me to the most secret places’.

In ciò ancora che perseverò in croce perfino alla morte, ci dà ammaestramento di perfetta obbedienza e pazienza, e di perseverare nella penitenza (Cavalcà, Esp.simbolo, 1342 [TLIO]).

‘In that too, that he endured the cross until death, he provides us with an example of perfect obedience and patience’.

Argante di Rossia stava da parte,/Guardando la battaglia tenebrosa:/Ed ecco ebbe adocchiato Brandimarte,/Che facea prova si meravigliosa,/Che contar non lo puo libro né carte./Tutta la sua persona è sanguinosa;/Mena a due mane quel brando tagliente,/Chi parte al ciglio, e chi perfino al dente (M. M. Boiardo, Orlando innamorato, 1-15, 1476-83 [LIZ]).
‘Brandimarte, Who gave such a splendid display, That could not be told in a book nor on paper, All his person is bloody, brandishing in two hands that cutting broadsword, Some he cut to the brow, and some through to the tooth’.

Also in the case of perfino my hypothesis is that the scalar component became conventional due to the frequent association of the lexeme with contexts in which it was expressed by other linguistic means. The additive component has for perfino a constant reflection in the diachrony – notice the universal quantification in (17): ‘to everything bends the sky’, explicitly referring to other entities:

(17) gli arbori e l’erbe mai non abbandona l’ordine naturale, e ‘l caldo e ‘l gelo e la temperie e ‘l frutto e ‘l generare; veggio i liquori esser sottratti al cielo fino a sua regione e congelare, poi li vediàn versare in acqua, in neve, in grandine o pruina: a tutto il ciel s’inclina, perfino a quel che la natura spreza (S. Serdini, Rime, 1389-1420 [LIZ]).

‘To everything bends the sky, even to that which nature despises’.

The first purely additive scalar example, non directional in either space nor time, dates from the XVI century (18); notice the shift from perfino[-PP], as in all examples above, to perfino[-DP]: “perfino [una catena di oro]DP... aveva” ‘even a gold chain he had’ (cf. section 4):

(18) Ivi a non so che giorni, fra Tiberio ritornò al giuoco cor un certo abito, che proprio pareva un capitano. Egli aveva una cappa rosada, cor una banda di velluto larga un palmo, calze di velluto bianco foderate di tela d’argento, e tutte bigarate di trine d’argento, un giubbone di raso bianco foderato di tela d’arcento, birretta di velluto con piuma, pontali e medaglia d’oro, dipo spada, pugnale, scarpe di velluto, guanti profumati con tanti assetti che pareva una buttiuccia. E certo lo sciagurato era tanto in ordine che non ardisco dirlo, penando che un frate trovasse tante cose d’acattare. Perfino una catena di oro di sesanta scudi aveva; e il frataccio aveva tanti anelli, fra d’oro e d’argento, che n’aveva zeppo tutte le dita, e aveva tanti addobbamenti che mai li saprei tutti raccontare (P. Fortini, Le giornate delle novelle dei novizi, 21, 1530-1540 [LIZ]).

‘A few days later friar Tiberio came back with a certain outfit, looking like a captain indeed. He had a pink cloak with a wide velvet band, white velvet socks lined with silver and all covered with silver lace, and then sword, dagger, velvet shoes, perfumed gloves… Even a sixty scudi gold chain he had.’

An example of “layering” (Hopper 1991) is (19), in which the old and the new meaning co-occur, the first perfino being scalar (“Giunse a lodar perfino l’idea d’innamorarmi” ‘he even got to praise the idea of falling in love’), the second one spatial (“Vi avrà con una occhiata letto perfin nel cuore” ‘He will have read… straight into your heart’):

(19) /MAR./Che dato egli non v’abbia alcun suggerimento? /GUID./Ecco i consigli suoi: palazzo infra i giardini, Amicizie, cavalli, conversazion, festini. È all’ultimo, cred’io solo per beffeggiarmi, Giunse a lodar perfino l’idea d’innamorarmi. /MAR./Cotai medicamenti son ben particolari; In bocca di mio zio sono extraordinari. Egli però degli uomini è buon conoscitore; Vi avrà con una occhiata letto perfin nel cuore (C. Goldoni, Il medico olandese, At. 1, sc. 4, 1756 [LIZ]).

‘That’s his advice: a palace in a park, friendships, horses, parties. And finally, only to mock me, I believe, he even got to praise the idea of falling in love. /MAR/ …He will have read… straight into your heart’.

The latest examples of a concrete directional value are in the XIX century (20):

(20) D’accesa fantasia son vote larve, che […] co’ miei rimorsi mi seguiran perfino entro il sepolcro (U. Foscolo, Tieste, At. 1, sc. 2-146, 1797 [LIZ]).

‘… empty ghosts that with my remorse will follow me into my grave’.,

although traces of this value are found in the use of perfino illustrated in (21) below and (19) above, in which a directional verb selects an abstract infinitive, as in “giunge a lodare” ‘gets to praise’:

(21) Egli giunge perfino a lodare i filosofi ed a biasimare la interessata (A.A.V.V. Il Conciliatore, 27, 1818-19 [LIZ]).
2.1.3. Summary

A set of contexts has been examined which are likely to have favoured the conventionalization of an evaluative component of scalar kind in the semantics of the particles. Clearly, the conception underlying this analysis is that language change is grounded in use: it is driven by Speakers/Writers experimenting with a certain expression to reach a certain effect. As the change spreads from the individual to the community, the use of the expression in those contexts will increase; this in turn will influence its syntactic and semantic properties. Yet, a crucial question remains unanswered: why are these particles chosen to fulfil such a function?

2.2. The role of lexical semantics in semantic change

The lexical semantics of the expressions, I shall argue, plays a crucial role in their evolution. **Addirittura** originates by the fixing in a construction meaning “in a straight line” of the preposition *a* (“to, in”) with the noun *dirittura* (“straight line”). From the spatial, geometrical sense of “directly”, as a straight line marks the shortest distance between two points in space, a temporal inference arises of an action happening “without stopping, fast”\(^1\). At this stage (XIV to XVII century), *a dirittura* always modifies a verb of motion, such as *venire* ‘to come’, *andare* ‘to go’, *atterrare* ‘to land’, etc. The emphasis conferred by such a modification of the predicate explains the appearance and diffusion of the expression in rhetorical contexts, such as (7): “il che non si può fare altrimenti che andando a dirittura a combattere con gli’ inimici” “which could be not done otherwise than by going directly/straight to fight the enemy”, or (8): “attachiamolo a dirittura” ‘let us charge him straight away’, with a gradual experimenting and subsequent extension to other predicates, such as *ammazzare* ‘to kill’ (9), *sposare* ‘to marry’ (10), etc. Such modified predicates are contrasted to other, non modified, predicates, building the paradigm of alternatives in which the additive component is rooted; thus: {“treat with indifference”, …. “charge”} (8), {“strip the flesh off”, …. “kill”} (9), {“flirt”, …. “marry”} (10).

**Perfino** originates from the combination of the completive aspect prefix *per* (Benucci 2001) “through” with an allative element, the adaptation from Latin ablative *fine* from *finis*, ‘confine, limite, margine’, ‘border, end’, meaning “fino a” “until”, both distributive and culminative. Its lexical semantics, denoting a spatial or temporal succession of a series of points to the very last one, explains why *perfino* is recruited to mark an end-point in emphatic contexts such as *perfino ai più segreti luoghi* ‘to the most secret places’ (14), or *perfino alla morte* ‘until death’ (15), and ultimately the insurgence of both the scalar and the additive component. The scanning of all points/instants to the last one on a space/time line is projected onto the mental scanning of a scale of values to mark its end-point. The presupposition of the existence of other entities beside the focused one is induced lexically by the completive value of the prefix *per* ‘through’, referring to all scanned entities, thus to other points/instants.

The idea that the original meaning tends to persist and constrain later meanings and structures is not new in historical linguistics\(^1\). Yet the role of lexical semantics in affecting both semantic and structural change has not, in my opinion, been fully explored. The approach that takes into account the role of the lexemes composing the markers in constraining and influencing the contexts in which they appear, and hence their change, allows us to make some interesting predictions: since the additive component is induced by the lexical semantics of *perfino* but not of *a dirittura*, the additive value will be weaker for the latter in Present Day Italian. Such a prediction is borne out by the data, where additivity does not seem to be an obligatory component in the meaning of *addirittura*. In (22), while the example containing *perfino* forces the interpretation that the Speaker...
won both the desk and the PC, *addirittura* allows the interpretation that the Speaker only won the latter:

(22) *Speravo di vincere lo scrittoio e ho vinto perfino/addirittura il personal computer* (Andorno 2000:83)

‘I was hoping to win the desk and I even/actually won the computer’.

A further argument is provided by the possibility of combining *addirittura* with an inherently additive marker such as *anche* ‘also’, a possibility excluded for *perfino*:

(23) *Poveri lilà! Sono addirittura/*perfino anche impopolari proprio là dove dovrebbero essere amati e protetti di più!* (La Stampa – Tuttolibri, 28.04.2001)

‘Poor lilacs! They are even also unpopular right there, where they should be most loved and protected’.

On the contrary, *perfino* is hardly compatible with a context that excludes additivity:

(24) *Alla corsa campestre sono arrivato addirittura/*perfino terzo.*

‘I finished… third in the cross-country race’.

The other level on which the different lexical semantics affects the change is morphosyntactic: *perfino* still retains selectional properties inherited from its origin as a prepositional modifier; thus, it has a more restrained distribution in comparison to *addirittura*, which, unlike *perfino*, can be used in Present Day Italian with sentential scope, as in (25) and as an interjection, as in (26):


‘The situation is alarming. Even, they’re talking about war’.

(26) *A. Ho incontrato Mario.*

*B. Addirittura!*

*A. I met Mario*

*B. Really!’

The interaction of lexical semantics and context in a theory of semantic change needs to be further explored in both a language-specific and a cross-linguistic perspective. For the former, it offers a sound and falsifiable method for questioning why expressions that are originally close in meaning then evolve in different directions. Thus, in the XIV century, *perfino* belongs to a paradigm of expressions having spatial-temporal value, such as *infino* or *in sino* ‘until’ - consider (27), in which *infino* and *perfino* appear to be interchangeable:

(27) *Il primo tratta del Padre infino a quella / parola: visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Lo / secondo tratta del Filìluolo incarnato e morto, / e per tutto perfino a quella parola: cjuus regni / non erit finis. Lo terzo tratta dello Spìrito / Santo, e poi infino alla fine per tutto* (Cavalca, Esp. simbolo, a.1342 (pis.) [TLIO]).

‘The former [book] concerns the Father until that word…. The second one concerns the Son… all through until that word… The third [book] concerns the Holy Spirit, through until the end’.

Yet the scalar value, which is present as an inference in some contexts just like for *perfino*, never lexicalizes in *infino*. Why? An explanation is in the lack of the completive aspect prefix *per*, which we saw played a crucial role in the semantic shift affecting *perfino*: in fact, historical dictionaries record *infino* used with the prefix *per* as in *per infino* “con valore intensivo” (GDLI), ‘with intensifying value’. Without the prefix, *infino* is not chosen to appear in emphatic contexts as frequently as its then (nearly) synonym *perfino*. 
Similarly, in a cross-linguistic perspective, why does French *directement*, like *a dirittura* meaning ‘in a straight line’, not acquire scalar meaning? Its lexical semantics, like that of its Italian cognate *direttamente*, appears from the origins to be linked to more static predicates than *a dirittura*, and acquires formulaic value in expressions such as, in the past form, “*avoir/avoir esté actempté directement (contre un traictié de paix)*” ‘to have/have been attempted directly (against a peace-treaty)’, as in (28).^{13}

(28) C’est assavoir pour donner à congnoistre au Roy que le traictié de la paix entre le Roy et luy [monseigneur le duc de Bourgogne] n’est point encore accompli en plusieurs articles de la part du Roy. Et aussy qu’il y a très grand nombre d’articles où on a actempté directement, et encore fait-on de jour en jour, contre ledit traictié de paix, au grand préjudice de monditseigneur de Bourgongne (Monstre [BFM]).

‘And also that there is a great number of articles where it has been directly attempted against the said peace-treaty…’.

*Dirittura*, on the other hand, appears from the origins linked to the idea of movement, as shown by all examples in section 2; the difference in evolution would thus be triggered by the difference in directional contexts available for *directement* (and *direttamente*) vs *a dirittura*.

The cross-linguistic application of this approach hints at the existence of semantic regularities in the evolution of scalar particles: the importance of directionals for the development of scalar meanings has already been noted for English (Traugott 2001: 10-12; forthcoming: 11-16):

(29) Amides te torte slit te skyn euene doun to te erte (1350-1420 Horses, 115 [Helsinki]).

‘In the middle of the abscess slit the skin directly down to the earth’.

Notice the affinity of the following late Middle English example of direction in time (30) to the temporal examples introduced by *perfino*, such as (31):

(30) but sayde, he had rather be sycke euen vnto death then he wold breake his espousals (1449 Latimer, Sermons, 36 [Helsinki] [Traugott 2001: 11]).

‘But said he would rather be sick unto death than break his vows’.

(31) In ciò ancora che perseverò in croce perfino/alla morte, ci dà ammaestramento di perfetta obbedienza/e pazienza, e di perseverare nella penitenza (Cavalcà, Esp. simbolo, 1342 [TLIO]).

‘In that too, that he endured the cross until death, he provides us with an example of perfect obedience and patience’.

3. Subjectification

The scalar value, I have argued, develops out of the conventionalization of an evaluative component having the Speaker as a source, first expressed by the context and then gradually absorbed by the lexemes themselves. The process thus represents an instance of *subjectification*, defined as “the dynamic process by which the speaker’s appraisals, points of view and attitudes about the event […] may find explicit codification in grammar” (Company forthcoming: 2). These particles are indeed another example of the tendency, documented cross-linguistically, for meanings to shift from “objective”, “propositional” and “based in the external described situation”, to “subjective”, “procedural” and “based in the internal (evaluative, perceptual, cognitive) described situation” (cf. Traugott and Dasher 2002: 94-95; Traugott forthcoming: 9; 19-20).

Subjectification as a semantic-pragmatic phenomenon has been the focus of many in-depth analyses (for an overview cf. Company forthcoming: 6-10; Traugott and Dasher 2002: 19-24; 89-99). Less thorough, in comparison, has been the investigation of the syntactic counterpart of subjectification. Specifically, its formal properties have been identified in the form of a weakening
or loss of control by the agent (cf. e.g. Langacker 1999; 2000) and in the fronting and broadening of
the scope of the predication (cf. e.g. Tabor and Traugott 1998). A systematic investigation of the
syntactic correlates of subjectification is conducted by Company (forthcoming). In her view,
subjectification, “besides being a semantic-pragmatic change displaying a regular pattern, also
constitutes a specific syntactic change of its own” (2). Her hypothesis is that there is an inverse
correlation between the quantity of syntax a form needs and the degree of subjective meaning that
form conveys, where “quantity of syntax” is defined in terms of the “syntactic capacity the form
has, i.e. the capacity to relate to other forms, to subcategorize, to take modification and
complementation, to be expanded, to be paraphrased by other forms, etc.” (4). Hence, “more syntax
= less subjectivity; less or even zero syntax = more subjectivity” (4). The main reason for this is
argued to be of cognitive nature: “When using a subjective form, the Speaker is […] only interested
in projecting his/her own judgments and perspectives of the event and, as a result […] neither the
referential nor the descriptive aspects of the expression are necessary, and, accordingly, syntax
comes dispensable” (4).

This hypothesis is to some extent consistent with the remarkable syntactic evolution of both
*perfino* and *addirittura* (cf. Visconti 2004).

Old Italian *perfino* is found in two syntactic types only: (i) in which *perfino* selects a
prepositional phrase (PP), as in (32) and in all the examples examined in section 2; (ii) in which
*perfino* selects a clausal complement (CP), as represented in (33):

(i)  *perfino* [...]*PP
(ii) *perfino* [...]*CP

(32)  *Nel mezzo del castello è una grande torre tutta murata d’andanicho fino et perfino [al cielo]* è / lunga la sua cima (Armannino, Fiorita, p.1325 [TLIO]).
‘In the middle of the castle there’s a great tower… and its summit reaches to the sky’.

(33)  *onde dice s. Agostino: / O Signore Dio, tu ci hai fatti a te, e però / inquieto è lo cuore nostro perfino [che non si riposa / in te]* (Cavalca, Esp. simbolo, a.1342 [TLIO]).
‘O Lord… restless is our heart until it rests (not) in you’.

In quantitative terms, in the TLIO database, *perfino* selects a PP in 18 cases out of 20, a CP in 2. Of
the 18 PP selected, all are headed by the preposition *a*, as is (32) above. In the clausal use, which is
found with both indicative and subjunctive mood, the main clause describes a state of affairs which
lasts until the one expressed in the subordinate clause intervenes (33).

Present Day Italian *perfino* is characterized by a much greater mobility and an increased
capacity of combining with different constituents: VP (34), AdjP (35), DP (36), AdvP, to which,
unlike in Old Italian, it can be postposed (34).14

(34)  *le voleva bene, allora! Egli [la temeva]_{VP} perfino* (F. Tozzi, L’amore, 42 [LIZ]).
‘He loved her, then. He even feared her’.

(35)  *Era molto inquieta, e mi parve perfino [dimagrata]_{AdvP} (F. Tozzi, Giovani, 61 [LIZ]).
‘She was very uncomfortable, and she even seemed to have lost weight’.

(36)  *E perché dimenticavo perfino [il mio nome]_{DP}? (F. Tozzi, Bestie, 15.4 [LIZ]).
‘And why would I forget even my name?’.

From the syntactic point of view, as shown by these data, *perfino* has shifted from VP-internal
position, sub-categorizing a PP or a CP, to Specifier of all main constituents. This increased
mobility would be in line with the hypothesis of a shift towards the loss of modification,
complementation and subcategorization properties that were required in the non-subjective reading.
The turning point in the syntactic evolution of *perfino* is represented by the XVI century, where for
the first time it selects a DP (37). This change in subcategorization properties is related to a semantic change, that is to the loss of the original spatial and temporal value of “until” and to an increased degree of subjectification in the ‘new’ scalar additive value:

(37) Ivi a non so che giorni, fra Tiberio ritornò al giuoco cor un certo abito, che proprio pareva un capitano. Egli aveva una cappa rosada, cor una banda di velluto larga un palmo, calze di velluto bianco foderate di tela d’argento [...] Perfino [una catena di oro di sesanta scudi]_{DP} aveva (P. Fortini, Le giornate delle novelle dei novizi, 21, 1530-1540 [LIZ]).

‘A few days later friar Tiberio came back with a certain outfit, looking like a captain indeed. He had a pink cloak with a wide velvet band, white velvet socks lined with silver and all covered with silver lace … Even a sixty scudi gold chain he had…’.

The correlation between subjectification and expendability of syntax is even more evident for addirittura. Old Italian a dirittura always modifies a PP in VP-internal position, as in (38) to (41), and directly precedes it in all cases but one (38):

(38) Nel detto anno sentendo la congiura, / che fer per rubellarsi i Ferraresi / da Santa Chiesa, [contro]_{PP} a dirittura / Cardinal Pelagru co’ Bolognesi / vi corse (A. Pucci, Centiloquio, 46-80, 1309-1388 [GDLI]).

‘In the said year hearing about the conspiracy/that the Ferraresi conspired to rebel / from Santa Chiesa, against [them] ran straight / Cardinal Pelagru with the Bolognesi’.

(39) Andò poi addirittura [alla rocca Sansimone]_{PP} e assediolla e minacciò di disfarla (Andrea da Barberino, 249, Florence, 1370-1431 [GDLI]).

‘He then went directly/straight to the Sansimone fortress and besieged it and threatened to destroy it’.

(40) Mandata detto di con lettere di Bartolomeo di Dono a dirittura [a Firenze]_{PP}, per Ioanni di Candia corriere (Rinaldo degli Albizzi, I-327, 1370-1442 [GDLI]).

‘Sent on the said day with letters of Bartolomeo di Dono directly to Florence’.

(41) Intanto ci furono avisi di Francia, come el re ne veniva a dirittura [in Italia]_{PP} con animo prontissimo di salvare noi ed abattere gli avversari e molto male disposto in verso el papa e Valentino (F. Guicciardini, Storie Fiorentine 22, 1508-1511 [LIZ]).

‘The king would come straight to Italy…’.

The shift to a much freer distribution in Present Day Italian, as exemplified in (42) and (43), is linked to the change in meaning from the original directional meaning to the modal one; such a semantic shift is revealed in diachrony by the expendability of the locative PP, as in (44), which was always present in the early use, as in (38) to (41) above:

(42) qualche volta, addirittura, disapprovava bestemmiando (F. Tozzi, Il podere, 9.7 [LIZ]).

‘sometimes, even, he would disapprove and swear’.

(43) Era addirittura troppo dopo un martirio troppo lungo (I. Svevo, La coscienza di Zeno [LIZ]).

‘It was even too much after such a long agony’.

(44) …Attacchiamolo a dirittura, alla militare (C. Goldoni, L’impostore, At. 2, sc. 15, 1754 [LIZ]).

‘…Let us charge him straight away, like soldiers’.

Both the subjectification process and the erosion of relational syntactic capacity are more advanced in addirittura, which, unlike perfino, can be used with sentential scope, as in (45) and as an interjection, as in (46):


‘The situation is alarming. Even, they’re talking about war’.
A. Ho incontrato Mario.
B. Addirittura!
‘A. I met Mario
B. Really!’

Such syntactic isolation, in which “either the forms are isolated between pauses, or the subjective expression constitutes a whole predication in and of itself, unable to establish syntactic relations with other predicates” (6), is viewed by Company (forthcominga) as the ultimate correlate of subjectification.15

As well as providing us with a coherent interpretation of the data concerning the otherwise puzzling syntactic evolution of Italian scalar particles, the hypothesis of a directly proportional syntactic reflection of subjectification can be used to reply to a criticism that has been addressed to the subjectification hypothesis itself (Visconti forthcoming). Such a criticism concerns its definition in qualitative rather than quantitative terms: to establish subjectification as a falsifiable hypothesis, one should be able to quantify and ‘measure’ different degrees of subjectification; it is otherwise hard to prove that a certain stage is characterized by a higher degree of subjectification than another. Addressing this issue requires a further reflection on the notion of subjectification. In Company’s view, subjectification is a specific syntactic change, as well as a semantic-pragmatic one. As such, subjectification is argued to share most properties of grammaticalization (e.g. decategorization) but to differ in other respects, as grammaticalization “usually conveys generalization and obligatorification [...] bonding” (Company forthcominga: 6), whereas “subjectification follows an inverse diachronic path, from syntax to discourse [...] and usually produces disjunction and an increase in the syntactic scope of the form” (ibid.). Subjectification is thus viewed as a “subtype of grammaticalization” in Company (forthcominga), while Company (forthcomings: 23-26) suggests redefining the concept of grammaticalization in wider, epistemological terms, in order to encompass the subjectification process undergone in the evolution of (Spanish) discourse markers from verbs.

In the next section I shall address the issue of the relationship between grammaticalization and subjectification, taking a different view: subjectification is best defined as a semantic-pragmatic phenomenon, with a specific syntactic reflection, in terms of a directly proportional expendability of syntax, as indicated by Company (forthcomings: 4). In this view, the degree of relational syntactic capacity of an expression undergoing subjectification can be used as an indicator of the degree of subjectivity/subjectification, as in the case of the more modal addirittura vs perfino, less advanced along the less-to-more-subjective cline.

4. Grammaticalization

A related question concerns grammaticalization: is the evolution of Italian scalar particles an instance of grammaticalization?16 This question raises some interesting issues related to the definition of grammaticalization and its relationship to subjectification. The first issue concerns the distinction between criterial vs characteristic properties of grammaticalization; the second issue concerns the relationship between properties of grammatical change and properties of semantic change that typically correlate with grammaticalization; the third issue concerns the recently proposed distinction between “primary grammaticalization”, “the change whereby lexical material in highly constrained pragmatic and morphosyntactic contexts is assigned functional category status” (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 81), and “secondary grammaticalization”, i.e. “the development of morphophonemic ‘texture’ associated with the categories in question” (Traugott 2002: 27).

I shall first identify a set of properties attributed in the literature to grammaticalization, then question their applicability to addirittura and perfino.
Lehmann (1995 [1982]) set “weight”, “cohesion” and “variability” as parameters along which degrees of grammaticalization can be measured on both the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes. On the former, grammaticalization would correlate with loss of integrity, i.e. loss of semantic and phonological weight:

1. bleaching
2. phonological attrition
3. increased paradigmaticization
4. obligatorification,

on the latter with scope reduction:

5. condensation

increased bondedness at the morphological level:

6. coalescence

and loss of freedom, or variability, at the syntactic level:

7. fixation.

Other typical features associated with grammaticalization are (cf. Hopper and Traugott 1993: 2-3; Traugott and Dasher 2002: 84-85):

8. Origins in local contexts/constructions
9. Generalization of contexts via analogy
10. Original meaning general
11. Pragmatic inferencing (shift in meaning in early stages)
12. Layering (Hopper 1991)
14. Subjectification
15. Reanalysis.

8 and 9 identify the source and mechanism of diffusion of the innovation; 10 to 14 are features of semantic change that typically accompany grammatical change. 15 is, in my opinion, a criterial feature, as grammaticalization always involves reanalysis (cf. Harris and Campbell 1995: 61; Hopper and Traugott 1993: 50-70).

The evolution of Italian focus scalar particles, as we have seen, manifests all properties characteristic of grammaticalization, i.e. 8 to 14 above. As far as the criterial properties are concerned, bleaching, paradigmaticization and coalescence are observed; condensation and fixation are not observed; obligatorification would, in my opinion, have to be re-thought as a criterion, as these particles are in some sense obligatory if one wants to convey a scalar meaning in Italian; phonological reduction is not a relevant parameter in this case, because both perfino and addirittura carry the nuclear tone (cf. König 1991b: 171).

Both perfino and addirittura originate in a specific construction, which is one of the arguments proposed by Waltereit (2002: 104-1007) to distinguish between the rise of discourse markers and grammaticalization, as the source constructions of the former are very often syntactically independent, whereas “the source constructions for grammaticalization are most often not syntactically complete” (Waltereit 2002: 1006): therefore, “grammatical obligatorification of discourse markers will not occur for their source constructions are not integrated into a structure of sentence grammar” (ibid.).
Addirittura manifests both decategorialization, in the fixing of the lexical noun dirittura in a PP with a, and bonding within the phrase of a with dirittura, following the cline, first identified by Traugott (1995), from VP internal adverb, as in the Old Italian examples, to sentence adverb, as in (45) above, to discourse marker, as in (46). As shown in section 3, a change in meaning is the prerequisite to the morphosyntactic change.

Perfino too manifests bonding within the phrase of per with fino, yet the case for decategorialization is less clear-cut: the origins of fino are in Latin finis “border, end”, i.e. a lexical item, but in the Italian data fino is found as a functional element already, as the adaptation of the Latin ablative fine meaning “until”. The syntactic evolution of perfino is thus a case of reanalysis from preposition to Specifier, i.e. from a functional to a functional category, the reanalysis being triggered by the semantic shift from spatial and temporal “until” to the additive scalar meaning “even”. The question is fascinating: Is the shift from preposition to scalar particle a case of grammaticalization? Perfino appears to push the limits of grammaticalization beyond the distinction indicated above between “primary” and “secondary” grammaticalization”, between, respectively, the change from lexical to functional category and the shift from grammatical to more grammatical, as its evolution does not correspond to an increase in the degree of grammatical interaction with contiguous elements in the clause that would be distinctive of the second type of grammaticalization (cf. e.g. Vincent 1999: 1136).

This issue requires further reflection, since scope reduction (condensation) and loss of freedom at the syntactic level (fixation), which in a Lehmannian perspective would correlate with grammaticalization, are not manifested in either addirittura nor perfino. On the contrary, like in the evolution of discourse markers, the shift from a conceptual, spatial or temporal meaning to a more ‘pragmatic’ meaning, in which the Speaker’s modalization is expressed, corresponds to the acquisition of a greater mobility within the clause and to scope enlargement, as addirittura in (45) above.

The correlation of scope reduction and fixation to grammaticalization has been challenged in a number of studies, leading to the argument that: “grammaticalization should not be thought of as necessarily entailing syntactic decrease in scope and bonding” (Traugott 1995: 15), and that “syntactic scope increases must be allowed for in a theory of grammaticalization” (ibid.: 14; cf. also Tabor and Traugott 1998: 231). The evolution of Italian scalar particles contributes new data to this question, which, in my opinion, should be thought of as an aspect of the relationship between semantic change and grammaticalization. All items that undergo grammaticalization but do not undergo scope reduction nor fixation are, to my knowledge, cases of subjectification. To capture this generalization, I argue, we do not need to consider subjectification as a specific syntactic change, nor to redefine grammaticalization, for which the criteria discussed above provide a useful, falsifiable, definition. Once we have decided, on the basis of such criteria, whether a phenomenon is a case of grammaticalization, and once we have established the presence of subjectification on the semantic side as an increased degree of encoding of the Speaker’s perspective, we can predict scope increase. This follows from the hypothesis discussed in section 3: losing the descriptive and referential aspects of their meaning, and consequently their relational syntactic capacity, subjectified expressions will not manifest condensation nor fixation.

5. Conclusions

In this paper I have outlined the evolution of the Italian focus particles perfino and addirittura, looking at the implications of the results for a theory of semantic change. These particles originate in spatial and temporal meanings to later acquire scalar value. The change has been shown to be favored by the regular association of the particles with contexts, in which the item they introduce is presented as: (i) ‘extreme’; (ii) the member of a set of alternatives (section 2.1.). The data have been discussed in the light of three issues. The first one concerns the role of lexical semantics in affecting
semantic and structural change (section 2.2.). The lexical semantics of *perfino*, both culminative and durative, and *a dirittura*, directional, has been shown to play a crucial role in the choice of these particles to fulfil the function highlighted in the contexts described in section 2.1, and hence in their change. Present Day Italian differences in value and distribution between *perfino* and *addirittura* too have been related to their different lexical semantics, *addirittura* focusing on the directeness of the path vs *perfino* focusing on its end-point and containing the roots of the additive component in the completive prefix *per*. The second issue concerns subjectification. The syntactic evolution of *perfino* and *addirittura* is analyzed as the structural reflection of the subjectification process that they undergo at the semantic level (section 3). The hypothesis of a systematic correlation between subjectification and expendability of syntax has led to a reflection on the concepts of both subjectification and grammaticalization (section 4). By questioning the applicability to *perfino* and *addirittura* of a set of features traditionally associated to grammaticalization, I have argued that *addirittura* is a case of grammaticalization, whereas *perfino* as a reanalysis from preposition to scalar particle challenges us to further investigate the less studied facet of grammaticalization, i.e. the shift from functional to (more) functional categories vs the one from lexical to functional. The related issue of scope increase has been discussed in the light of the data described in section 2.1. Rather than conflating syntax and semantics in defining the notion of subjectification, as for instance in Company (forthcoming a), I suggest grammaticalization should be identified on the basis of the criterial properties discussed in section 4, while the hypothesis of a systematic syntactic correlate of subjectification along the lines defined in Company (forthcoming a) (cf. section 3) allows us to predict scope increase as the result of the presence of subjectification on the semantic side in independently identified cases of grammaticalization.

Two substantial questions require further investigation. The first one concerns the evaluation of the focus-sensitiveness of these particles in a diachronic perspective: when did the association with focus arise and what role did it play in the evolution of the particles? The second question concerns a more in-depth reflection on the notion of context in linguistic change, as a tool to sharpen the diachronic micro-pragmatic approach: for each phenomenon, a distinction should be drawn between the linguistic and the extra-linguistic components of the contexts favoring the change, as such components are often conflated in the literature, with a fine-grained analysis of the linguistic traits characterizing each context (mood, Aktionsart, negation, etc.), in order to tease out the different weight that each factor bears on the change.

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Notes

1 Cf. *in primis* the seminal work of Kay (1990) and König (1991a); see also Schwenter (1999; 2002). Apart from the suggestions in König (1991a: 135; 163-173), the only diachronic studies are, to my knowledge, Traugott’s on English even (e.g. Traugott 2001; forthcoming).

2 Synchronically too, Italian focus particles have been studied only recently (cf. Andorno 2000; Bazzanella 1995; De Cesare 2002; Ricca 1999).

3 *Perfino* and *persino* have been shown to follow a parallel path (Visconti 2004); for the sake of this paper I shall focus on *perfino*. 

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This generalization will be specified in the light of the differences between the two particles (cf. section 2.2; Visconti in preparation).


The data are from the databases of the Tesoro della Lingua Italiana delle Origini [TLIO], the Letteratura Italiana Zingarelli [LIZ] and the Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana [GDLI]. Periodization is a controversial issue in the history of the Italian language. I had the chance to discuss this issue with one of the greatest historians of the Italian language, Lorenzo Renzi, who argues for a distinction into 5 periods, each of them being characterized by a specific set of linguistic traits (Renzi p.c.): the XIII century, the XIV century (both of which I shall encompass under the label of Old Italian), the XV century, then the block XVI-XIX centuries, marked by the imitation of the linguistic ‘models’ of the past and hence by a peculiar language; only from the XIX century onwards can Modern Italian be said to have started, until the XX and XXI centuries, to which I shall refer as Present Day Italian.

5 Referring to “diachronic micro-pragmatics” as “the rigorous linguistic analysis of the role of pragmatic and discourse-contextual factors in the development of linguistic changes, most especially semantic change” (Schwenter 2003).


8 Referring to “diachronic micro-pragmatics” as “the rigorous linguistic analysis of the role of pragmatic and discourse-contextual factors in the development of linguistic changes, most especially semantic change” (Schwenter 2003).

9 Notice how (11’) becomes acceptable by preposing the subject ‘il Duca’ (Bazzanella p.c.), as in (11’”):

(11’”) Se comandassero donne, son certa e son sicura, Che il Duca saria condannato.

This confirms the hypothesis of an interaction between the semantics of the particles and utterance focus properties (cf. Visconti in preparation).

10 As noted by Haspelmath (1997: 67): “directional expressions are commonly used to denote location along a line which is scanned sequentially by the mind and is thereby assimilated to a directed path”; such a cognitive operation is lexicalized in a dirittura. An aspect that would require further investigation is the role played by the evolution of scalar particles in a theory of spatial cognition (cf. Bazzanella 2001: 201-202; Levinson and Wilkins forthcoming on the conceptualization and codification of spatial distinctions in different languages).


12 Cf. e.g. Andorno (2000: 84), who calls perfino “additivo inerente” ‘inherent additive’ vs addirittura “additivo compatibile” ‘compatible additive’.

13 The data are from the Base de Français Mèdieval. Thanks to Céline Guillot (CNRS, Lyon) for her kind help with the database.

14 The syntactic properties of focusing particles, in particular their distributional freedom (cf. e.g. Ernst 2002: 216-219; 351-353 and references therein), pose an interesting puzzle to theories engaged in a unitary treatment of adverb phrases (cf. Cinque 1999: 30-32).

15 I am less sure of the applicability of this parameter to all instances of subjectification, although it seems to work in the evolution of discourse markers and also in subordination (Thompson 2002: 136-141: in Company forthcoming; 8).

16 Cf. the parallel discussion in Traugott (1995) and Waltereit (2002): is the evolution of discourse markers a case of grammaticalization?

17 I am grateful to Craige Roberts for pointing out this fascinating question to me.

18 Cf. e.g. Roberts (2004: 197-198).

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**Corpora**

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