THE GRAMMATICALIZATION AND PRAGMATICALIZATION OF INTENSIFYING ADVERBS IN ENGLISH: A CLOSER LOOK AT 'REALLY' / LA GRAMMATICALISATION AND PRAGMATICALISATION DES ADVERBES INTENSIFIEURS EN ANGLAIS / LE CAS DE 'REALLY' 1

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THE GRAMMATICALIZATION AND PRAGMATICALIZATION OF INTENSIFYING ADVERBS IN ENGLISH: A CLOSER LOOK AT 'REALLY'

Abstract: *Intensifiers in English appear to be at the junction of grammar and lexis thanks to an unachieved process of grammaticalization. They are sometimes also subjected to pragmaticalization processes. This paper discusses the case of the intensifying adverb 'really'. After laying down the theoretical framework used to analyze the various uses of this intensifying adverb, this paper presents the various uses of really through a corpus-based study. The focus is then put on the criteria that make 'really' a grammaticalized adverb before investigating to what extent it can be considered as an instance of pragmaticalization.*

Key words: *Intensification, grammaticalization, lexicalization, subjectification, pragmaticalization*

LA GRAMMATICALISATION AND PRAGMATICALISATION DES ADVERBES INTENSIFIEURS EN ANGLAIS / LE CAS DE 'REALLY'

Abstract: *Les adverbes intensifieurs en anglais ont la particularité de se situer dans la zone de passage qui relie le lexique à la grammaire dans la mesure où nous postulons qu'ils sont issus d'un processus de grammaticalisation inachevé. Certains d'entre eux sont parfois même soumis à un processus de pragmaticalisation, comme c'est le cas pour l'adverbe intensifieur « really ». Cet article commence par rappeler les fondements théoriques sur lesquels repose l'argumentation, en procédant à une définition des processus de grammaticalisation et de pragmaticalisation. Après avoir présenté et justifié le corpus sélectionné, soit les 208 épisodes de la série télévisée américaine How I Met Your Mother, cet article expose les critères qui permettent de considérer que « really » a fait l'objet d'un processus de grammaticalisation et s'interroge sur le processus de pragmaticalisation subi par really en invoquant des concepts tels que la « subjectification ».*

Mots-clés *: Intensification, grammaticalisation, lexicalisation, subjectification, pragmaticalisation*

Introduction

Intensifying adverbs in English lie at the interface of lexicon and grammar (Bordet (2014)). Indeed, all intensifying adverbs such as *very*, *completely*, *totally*, or *really*, which will receive attention in the course of this study, are derived from adjectives or adverbs of manner, i.e. from lexemes. As intensifying adverbs, they acquire new functional roles specific to this type of adverb, roles they did not have when they were mere adverbs of manner.

One may then wonder: how does the transition from the purely lexical status of adverb of manner to the more functional status of intensifier adverb take place? Insofar as I posit that intensifying adverbs in English are at the crossroads between lexicon and grammar and undergo a process of grammaticalization, or even pragmaticalization for some, do they still retain some lexical content, or are they comparable to "empty words" as described by Stoffel (1901, p. 32)?

According to Bolinger (1972: 18), intensifiers are essentially grammatical: "Intensification involves morphemes many of which […] are **truly functional elements, closer to the heart of the grammar** than are nouns or adjectives."[1] (Bolinger, 1972: 18)

In this paper, I take a more nuanced stance, postulating that these types of adverbs lie at the crossroads of lexicon and grammar, due to the residual lexical properties that they retain and the new functional roles they acquire through a dual process of grammaticalization/lexicalization. These new roles may materialize as the emergence of intensifiers, but also, in some cases, as the evolution of these adverbs into discourse markers through a process of pragmaticization.

I shall open the discussion by providing the reader with reminders of how the processes of grammaticalisation/lexicalisation and pragmaticalisation work and apply said processes to intensifying adverbs. I shall then present and justify the choice of corpus I relied on for this study. Finally, I shall show to what extent adverbial intensifiers in English can be said to undergo a process of grammaticalization, or even pragmaticalization, with particular focus on the adverb *really*.

1. The processes of grammaticalization and lexicalization

According to Kurylowicz (1965: 69), the process of grammaticalization is defined as follows: "Grammaticalization consists in the increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical or from a less grammatical to a more grammatical status, e.g. from a derivative formant to an inflectional one." (Kurylowicz, 1965: 69)

Grammaticalization implies that a lexical item becomes a grammatical one, or that an already grammatical item acquires additional grammatical properties. It entails a number of consequences at various levels, depending on how advanced the process is. The consequences are observed at the semantic level, notably through semantic bleaching and metaphorization, but also at the morphosyntactic and phonological level, with the acquisition of new functional properties, increased constraints on use and morphophonological reductions. My aim is to show that intensifying adverbs do not undergo all of these changes, but only some of them, which leads me to locate them in the blurry transition area between lexicon and grammar (see (Bordet, 2014) for further explanation).

As for lexicalization, it has a wide range of meanings in reference works. For the purpose of this paper, I shall focus on one particular meaning. By "lexicalization" I mean the inclusion of a term into the lexicon following Himmelmann (2004).

2. Pragmaticalization

It is also necessary to give the definition of pragmaticalization that will be be used as a theoretical framework throughout this study. According to Drescher & Frank-Job (2006: 361), "pragmaticalization" can be understood as follows: "[…] the process by which a syntagma or word form, in a given context, changes its propositional meaning in favor of

[1] My emphasis.

an essentially metacommunicative, discourse interactional meaning." (Drescher & Frank-Job, 2006: 361)

Norde (2010: 21) sees this process as the "development of discourse markers"(Norde, 2010: 21). Traugott (1995; 2009) share this point of view and includes the involvement of the speaker in her definition of pragmaticalization insofar as it is linked to the notion of "subjectivity" that she develops: "The term captures the fact that the items in their stage as discourse particles have major pragmatic functions. They express speaker attitude to what has gone before, what follows, the discourse situation, and so forth." (Traugott, 1995: 1)

It is widely acknowledged that certain intensifiers (*well*, *so*) also function as discourse markers. It has also been established that intensifiers serve to convey speaker attitude, hence subjectivity ((Paradis, 1997); (Lambert, 2004); (Xiao & Tao, 2007)). In this sense, intensifiers seem to be subject to the process of pragmaticalization and fall within the definition proposed by Traugott (2009).

Depending on the linguistic school of thought, pragmaticalization may be perceived as a phenomenon distinct from grammaticalization ((Claridge & Arnovick, 1995)) or as an extension of the latter ((Brinton & Traugott, 2006), (Diewald, 2011)). According to Brinton (2006: 308), the development of discourse markers shares many characteristics with grammaticalization: "[D]iscourse markers appear to undergo many of the morphosyntactic and semantic changes associated with grammaticalization." (Brinton, 2006: 308)

I shall not discuss these diverging opinions, as this is not the purpose of this paper. I simply wish to highlight the fact that the evolution of certain intensifiers can lead them to develop pragmatic roles in certain cases. In order to do so, I will draw on the analyses carried out by Brinton and Traugott (2006) and adopt the theoretical stance according to which pragmaticalization is a possible extension of the grammaticization process.

3. Corpus presentation: data collection and methodology

The corpus used for this study is made up of all 9 seasons of the American comedy TV series *How I Met Your Mother* produced by Carter Bays and Craig Thomas and broadcast in the USA from September 2005 to May 2014 on CBS. I chose a comedy series because this type of medium is conducive to the use of intensifying adverbs[2]. Although this is not a corpus of authentic spoken English as it is scripted, the work carried out by Tagliamonte and Roberts (2005) on the TV series *Friends* and on authentic spoken English corpora showed that essentially identical results could be obtained from authentic and fictional corpora. The use of intensifying adverbs, and of *really* in particular, in the series *How I Met Your Mother* should thus reflect the use of *really* in a context of spontaneous spoken English for American speakers aged 25 to 40.

As far as methodology is concerned, the data was collected and sorted manually. I proceeded to collect the transcripts for all 208 episodes. Those were not the original scripts provided by the authors, but transcriptions found on a fan forum based on subtitles. In order

[2] See the link between intensifiers and humor, as well as intensifiers and emotions (Bergen & Binsted (2003); Bordet (2019); Bostan & R. Klinger (2019)).

for the corpus data to be accurate, I made sure to verify that the transcriptions were correct by watching all episodes while reading the transcriptions and I made the necessary corrections when needed. I then proceeded to a computer-assisted search of all occurrences of *really* and I extracted them from the corpus for further analysis.

The corpus under scrutiny is made up of 1239 occurrences of *really*, making it the second most frequent intensifier of the corpus after *so*[3]. It should be stressed that it occurs in a variety of syntactic contexts, with a scope that is not limited to adjectives, verbs or other adverbs, as should suggest the use of prototypical intensifying adverbs. For example, *really* is used to modify adjectives, adverbs, predicates, prepositional groups, whole clauses and even discourse itself in some case. The extension of *really's* use to a variety of distributional contexts is undoubtedly a sign of a relatively advanced stage of grammaticalization as I shall explain further in this paper. But does *really* function as an intensifier in all the occurrences under scrutiny, especially those in which the discourse itself is modified? Before determining whether *really* still behaves as an intensifier, and whether it has indeed undergone a process of grammaticalization and pragmaticalization, I shall review *really*'s semantic and syntactic evolution, which will prove necessary for the analysis of the occurrences collected in the corpus.

4. The syntactic and semantic evolution of *really*

According to Defour (2012), the first uses of *really* corresponded to the adverb of manner, meaning *actually*, *in actual fact*, *in reality* or *in a real manner*, and date back to the 15th century. Here is an example taken from the corpus, since this meaning of *really* persists in contemporary English:

(1) **Barney**: I know Robin was never *really* married. (*HIMYM* S02E09)

In (1), *really* is used to refer to reality rather than to indicate intensification. Indeed, *really* can easily be switched with *actually* as confirmed by the following gloss *I know Robin was never **actually** married* but cannot be replaced by another intensifier **I know Robin was never **so** / **very** married*. The non-scalar participial adjective *married*, as well as the negation, make it easier to interpret *really* as a reference to reality, rather than as an intensification marker. Another possible gloss for what Barney is saying is that he knows for a fact that the predicative relation <Robin - be married> has never been validated in the extralinguistic world. The negation of *really* is used here to deny the reality of the facts.

It was not until the 17th century, Defour (2012) explains, that *really* acquired more functional properties and came to be used as a modifier of scalar adjectives, taking on an intensifying function in these contexts. In this sense, *really* can be said to have undergone a lexicalization process, since the intensifier corresponds to a new dictionary entry.

At the end of the 17th century, *really* also began to enjoy more syntactic freedom also known as flexibilization (Norde, 2010), as it can now appear at the front of an utterance and it exhibits a linguistic function in that it conveys the speaker's attitude towards propositional content: “In the second half of the seventeenth century *really* also develops more pragmatic

[3] A previous study was conducted to identify the most frequent intensifying adverbs in the corpus.

meanings as an attitudinal disjunct, with a fronted syntactic position and a correlating broader scope." (Norde, 2010: 77)

She goes on to explain the transition from intensifier to adverb with linguistic function: "[T]he utterance-initial use of *really* allows the speaker to emphasize the truth level of the entire proposition, and as such reveals a high degree of subjective input." (Norde, 2010: 77)

Really has thus gone from expressing the "high degree" or "great quantity" of qualitative properties contained in the adjective it modifies – an already subjective cognitive operation on the part of the speaker – to an even more subjective expression that now emphasizes the high degree of reality, and by extension, the truth of the propositional content. From an adverb expressing an objective[4] reality, which is tangible or visible in the extralinguistic world, *really* has evolved towards increasingly metadiscursive uses. Here is an example of *really* taken from the corpus to illustrate this type of use:

(2) **Charity**: Why don't you recite your favorite passage of scripture?
Ted: That's a great idea, Charity. But, *really*, I don't know. I mean how do you choose your favorite passage? It's the Bible; there's so many... great ones... That one from Pulp Fiction's pretty cool. (*HIMYM* S02E11)

In this example, *really* seems to function partly as a discourse marker and partly as an adverb with linguistic function. Thus, it serves to convey a judgment on the part of the speaker – a judgment which, even if it is based on what is held to be real and therefore true by extension, may not be totally objective depending on the context, in that it reflects the perception and therefore the speaker's subjectivity. Defour (2012: 87) shares this position and stresses the importance of the subjective dimension in the use of *really*:

> [T]his truth is more clearly embedded in the perspective of the speaker than in an objective reality. […] [T]he utterance-initial use of *really* allows the speaker to emphasize the truth level of the entire proposition, and as such reveals a high degree of subjective input. (Defour, 2012: 87)

In example (2), it would seem that *really* has acquired metadiscursive properties which indicate that it has reached a certain stage of grammaticalization / pragmaticalization.

From a semantic point of view, Biber et al. (2002: 385) mention the difficulty of analyzing *really* when it functions as a constituent adverb: "Some instances seem clearly to have the epistemic stance meaning of 'in reality' or 'in truth' especially when the adverb is in initial or final position. […] But in medial position, the meaning is less clear." (Biber et al., 2002: 385)

I posit that when *really* is a constituent adverb, it can be interpreted as an intensifier, but also as a marker referring to subjective perception of reality. The theoretical position I adopt is as follows: for any use of *really* as an intensifier, both interpretations are possible. However, one of the two is emphasized and put forward to the detriment of the other, which is relegated in the background according to the principle of highlighting/hiding developed by

[4] I use the term "objective" but I am fully aware that absolute objectivity does not exist, as all utterances are always more or less filtered through the speaker's perception.

cognitive linguistics, which I rely on to explain the possible double reading of certain uses of *really*. Consider the following examples:

(3) **Barney**: Oh bad news. Marshall got food poisoning.
Twin 1: What?
Twin 2: That's so bad. I *really* liked him. (*HIMYM* S02E02)

(4) **Ted:** Robin, it's good to *really* see you… I mean, it's *really* good to see you. (*HIMYM* S07E22)

In (3), the main role of *really* is one of intensification, as confirmed by the following gloss: *I liked him a lot/very much*, which is more or less equivalent meaning-wise. In the background, however, the notion of "reality" may be perceived and recovered through the following gloss: *I liked him a lot and what I'm saying is true/real*.

Example (4) is interesting in that it shows that the meaning differs if the scope of *really* is different. This example needs to be contextualized in order to fully understand what is at stake. In this episode, Ted has just broken up with Robin and he desperately tries to get over her by dating other women. However, he keeps seeing Robin's face everywhere he looks even though she is not around. At the end of the episode, he decides to go find her and he bumps into her as she gets off a taxicab. That is when he utters the line in (4): "Robin, it's good to *really* see you… I mean, it's *really* good to see you". In the first segment of the utterance, the scope of *really* is the verb *see* and intensification of the item that is modified is relegated to the background while emphasis is laid on reality, hence the possible gloss: *It's good to actually see you / to see you for real / in real life*. In the second segment of the utterance, the scope of *really* is no longer a verb or predicate but the adjective *good*. In this case *really* intensifies the adjective *good* and intensification is put forward, which is why *really* can be replaced by another intensifier: *it's very / so good to see you*. The notion of reality may be retrieved, but it is relegated to the background. The distributional context therefore has a direct impact on the semantics of *really*.

This ties in with the function that Paradis & Bergmark (2003: 73) call "metalinguistic comment" (p. 73), a function they attribute to all uses of *really* as an intensifier. Defour (2012: 89) confirms that both readings remain possible, in that the original sense of "referring to reality" has allowed the development of new meanings: "Considering the speaker and hearer will generally assume that their interlocutor is speaking the truth, an explicit truth assertion will be understood as added emphasis, or as a means to highlight additional pragmatic functions." (Defour, 2012: 89)

The very fact of using the intensifying adverb *really* may be perceived as a marker of intensification in all cases, since the co-speaker always assumes that what the speaker says is true and in line with reality – be it an objective reality or a subjective perception of reality that the speaker holds to be true. If the speaker explicitly uses *really* to emphasize the truthfulness of his or her words, an interpretation of *really* as an intensifying adverb or as a mark of emphasis in the broader sense is possible. Even if it always seems possible to interpret *really* as an intensifying device, I put forward that the intensification it conveys does not have the same strength depending on the context in which *really* is used. Indeed, *really* seems stronger, when used as a prototypical intensifier, insofar as the emphasis is laid on a single constituent whose semantic content is intensified. But when its scope is a predicate or

discourse itself, *really* seems to have a weaker intensifying potential since in these cases it is sometimes the notion of "reality" or the truthfulness of what is said that is stressed.

Now that the semantics of *really* has been tackled, I shall take a closer look at the occurrences found in the corpus to determine whether the adverb *really* has indeed undergone a process of grammaticalization and pragmaticalization.

4.1. The grammmaticalization of *really*

While analyzing the corpus, I identified a total of 1239 occurrences of *really*, which can be broken down as follows:

- Really + predicate: 777 occurrences
- Really + adjective: 400 occurrences
- Really + adverb: 15 occurrences
- Really + adverbial particle: 13 occurrences
- Really (linguistic function) + proposition: 34 occurrences

Following Lehmann's grammatical parameters (2002), which will be discussed later on in this subsection, the expansion of *really* to other distributional contexts than the prototypical ones is a clear sign of its grammaticalization, given that the first uses of *really* were limited to modifying predicates. I propose to take a closer look at each of these structures to analyze how they function and analyze the semantic contents of *really* according to distributional contexts, since I have already pointed out that it can have multiple meanings.

- Really + predicate

(5) **Marshall**: Lily, listen, we *really* need the money. I have some leads on a job, but until then, I just... I don't know what else we can do. (*HIMYM* S03E19)

(6) **Lily**: Oh, my god, do I *really* chew that loudly? (*HIMYM* S03E09)

(7) **Robin**: Ted. *really*, *really* think about that dinner we all just had together. (*HIMYM* S03E08)

(8) **Simon:** Yeah. I know. I figure we're about four or five gigs away from *really* exploding. We're gonna be big, babe. I mean, like Crash-Test-Dummies big. So, that everything? All right. Listen, babe... It's over. (*HIMYM* S03E16)

(9) **Stella**: But the truth is, I *really* do want to do this with you. I don't think I'd regret it at all. (HIMYM S03E18)

Really modifying predicates was the first structure to develop diachronically, as was mentioned earlier. It remains by far the most frequent use in the corpus totaling more than half of the collected occurrences. In examples (5) to (9), the scope of the intensifying adverb is always a predicate. In the assertive statement in (5), *really* relates to the predicate *need the money*. Marshall is about to accept a job that goes against his political beliefs, and Lily reminds him of this. He then insists on the need for money to feed his family. The double interpretation of *really* may be perceived in this statement, which, indicates a real, objective necessity on the one hand, and on the other, insists on this necessity itself. A possible gloss

consists in replacing *really* with another intensifier or an element denoting reality and it indicates that both readings are possible in this statement: *we so / very much / actually need the money.* However, if the notion of truth or reality may be retrieved it seems to be relegated to the background while the intensifying force of *really* is put forward.

- *Really* + adjective

(10) **Lily**: But the guy is *really* great. And his kid's sweet. He's in my class. (*HIMYM* S03E04)
(11) **Barney**: Ted, this is New York city... You're never gonna drive it. This is a *really, really* stupid purchase, and I'm sorry, but none of us can support it. Shotgun for eternity! (*HIMYM* S03E15)
(12) **Ted from 2030**: This went on for a *really* long time. Some of them jokes were elegant and well-crafted... (*HIMYM* S03E16)

Really modifying an adjective represents the second most frequent use for this adverb in the corpus (400 occurrences representing one third of the corpus). Insofar as it is a prototypical intensifying adverb in examples (10) to (12), it is naturally intensification that is put forward in this utterance. In (10), thanks to *really*, Lily attributes many of the qualitative properties contained in the adjective *great* to the man she's talking about. The interpretation of *really* as a reference to reality is also recoverable, as the following gloss demonstrates: *But the guy is so / actually / truly great.*

- *Really* + adverb

(13) **Robin**: Wow! That makes me want to join a gym. So I can get super strong and punch you *really* hard in the face. (*HIMYM* S03E10)
(14) **Ted:** Yeah, I'm also "oot". Okay, now I'm *really* out. (*HIMYM* S03E16)
(15) **Randy**: Dripping with game, that's what I'm doing. Okay let's go. No. Yes. No! Randy listen to me: you can do this okay? Ok. I don't know. Are those girls *really* that hot? (*HIMYM* S03E18)

As an intensifying adverb, the prototypical scope of *really* may also include other adverbs, as in examples (13) to (15), where it modifies *out* (14), *that hot* (15) and *hard* (13) which is derived from the adjective by a conversion process or functional shift and is used here as an adverb. It is the strength of the blow that is put to the foreground in this extract.

- *Really* + a complex verb

(16) **Ted**: Kids, back when we were younger, your Uncle Marshall and I were *really* into college basketball. (*HIMYM* S03E14)

In example (16), it might be tempting to think that *really* modifies the prepositional group into college basketball. However, into forms a complex verb with *be* as in *be into something*, whose meaning is more or less equivalent to *like*, *enjoy* or *be interested in*. In this context, *really* denotes Ted and Marshall's high level of interest in college basketball. The 13 occurrences found in the corpus correspond without exception to complex verbs such as *be*

over or *be in love*. It would seem, then, that *really* concerns the predicative link in these occurrences.

- *Really* (linguistic function) + proposition

(17) **Barney**: Most people associate success with money and power, but, *really*, it's a state of mind. (*HIMYM* S04E14)
(18) **Stella**: But, *really*, my only free time is the two minutes I get for lunch, so… (*HIMYM* S03E13)
(19) **Ted**: But, *really*, I don't know. (*HIMYM* S02E11)
(20) **Ted**: You know, there really are a million things I could tell you about Lily and Marshall, but *really*, the only thing you need to know is that ten years into their relationship, they still couldn't spend a single night apart (HIMYM S02E20)
(21) **Marshall**: *Really*, dude, bravo! (*HIMYM* S06E13)
(22) **Curt**: Well, the Knicks lost. It's sad, *really*. They had a real shot. Then, out of nowhere, game over. And why? Why, Robin? (*HIMYM* S03E11)
(23) **Ted**: He was an architect with the soul of a poet, *really*. (*HIMYM* S05E21)

Weight	**Early grammaticalisation**	**Advanced grammaticalisation**
Integrity	Polysyllabic Retains part of its semantic content depending on the context of use	Weak semantic content when used as an adverb with linguistic function
Structural scope	N/A	*Really* intensifies the meaning of the item it modifies
Cohesion		
Paradigmaticity	Little paradigmatic integration	N/A
Bondedness	Morphologically, syntactically and phonologically independent item	N/A
Variability		
Syntagmatic variability	Variable position for the adverb with linguistic function	Fixed position when is has a narrow scope

Paradigmatic variability	Deliberate choice on the part of the speaker according to communicative needs. No fixed structures.	N/A

In occurrences (17) to (23) *really* is found either in fronted position (21), mid-sentence in between commas or intonation pauses ((17) to (20)) or in stranded position ((22) and (23)). In all occurrences, whatever position it is found in, *really* plays the role of an adverb with linguistic function conveying the speaker's subjectivity. It represents a metadiscursive comment and underlines the speaker's subjective perception and, by extension, the notion of "reality", as confirmed by the following gloss for (17): *But in fact / in reality, it's a state of mind*. Intensification can be retrieved if we consider that Barney insists on the veracity of his words through the explicit use of *really*. The same interpretation can be made of examples (18) to (23). Noticeably, in examples (17) to (20), *really* is used after the adversative marker *but* which signals the speaker's conflicted view on the propositional content which is reinforced by the adverb *really* to convey speaker attitude.

I have applied Lehmann's (2002) six grammaticalization parameters to *really* according to the distributional context in which it is found in order to determine whether it has undergone a grammaticalization process and whether it has more lexical or grammatical properties. The tests carried out are summarized in Table 1:

Table1: Lehmann's six grammaticalization parameters

Table 1 shows that *really* exhibits a hybrid functioning thus confirming the hypothesis that it lies in the transition zone between lexicon and grammar. It is a polysyllabic adverb that retains more or less of its original semantic content depending on its use. Like all other intensifiers, it exerts an influence on the cotextual elements it modifies and shows little paradigmatic integration. It remains independent, despite a constrained syntactic position when used with narrow scope. It enjoys relative syntactic freedom when used as an adverb with linguistic function, since it can be found at the front or end of an utterance, but also in between clauses. I shall see in the next section, however, that according to Traugott (2009), syntactic freedom is not incompatible with grammaticalization. On the contrary, she argues that it indicates that *really* has undergone a process of subjectification and hence pragmaticalization, which, according to the theoretical stance I have taken, is an extension of grammaticalization. Finally, to the best of my knowledge, *really* does not appear in fixed structures. In this sense, its use is always the result of the speaker's choice. As shown in Table 1, really has an intensifier has clearly been grammaticalized even if the process has not reached an advanced stage. Therefore, *really*, like other intensifiers, is still used as a lexeme, but it has acquired some grammatical properties.

I have shown that the development of the adverbial intensifier *really* is the result of the joint action of grammaticalization and lexicalization processes. I would now like to show the extent to which it can also be considered to have undergone a process of

pragmaticalization, by focusing on the uses of *really* that take on a linguistic function (examples (16) to (18)).

4.2. The pragmaticalization of *really*

Compared to the prototypical use of *really* with predicates, adjectives or adverbs, the number of occurrences of *really* modifying discourse itself is much lower (just 34 occurrences). This may be interpreted as a sign of more recent development. Indeed, according to Defour (2012), this type of use is one of the last to have emerged.

I have suggested that when *really* is syntactically independent it may be interpreted a discourse particle, even if it does not display all the characteristics of a discourse marker. To what extent, then, can it be said to have undergone a process of pragmaticalization?

It could be argued that the development of *really* as an adverb with linguistic function runs counter to grammaticalization in that it exhibits a high degree of syntactic independence and extended scope. However, a reduction in syntactic constraints and a widening of scope remain compatible with grammaticalization according to Brinton & Traugott (2005: 138), who write: "[T]he notion of scope reduction has been challenged in grammaticalization generally (Tabor and Traugott, 1998) and in the case of the grammaticalization of discourse markers specifically". (Brinton & Traugott, 2005: 138)

It should also be emphasized that Traugott (1995: 1) considers that adverbs tend to grammaticalize according to the following pattern:

> I will argue that a further cline: Clause internal Adverbial > Sentence Adverbial > Discourse Particle (of which Discourse Markers are a subtype) should be added to the inventory. […] In some languages like English this cline involves increased syntactic freedom and scope, and therefore violates the principles of bonding and reduced scope frequently associated with grammaticalization. **It nevertheless illustrates a cluster of other long-attested structural characteristics of early grammaticalization**. […] It also illustrates a number of more recently recognized characteristics, especially pragmatic strengthening and subjectification[5]. (Traugott, 1995: 1)

Such an evolution seems to correspond to that of *really*. From a syntactic point of view, *really* as an adverb with linguistic function, i.e. broader scope, can be said to have undergone a process of pragmaticalization in that it is syntactically independent of the clause. What about its semantic content? I have suggested that *really* as an adverb with linguistic function retains some of its original semantics as a reference to reality, albeit a subjective perception of that reality. According to Traugott (2012: 561), pragmaticalization implies greater subjectivity:

> [M]any of the examples in which the rise of subjective, and especially intersubjective meanings, is discussed have recently been labeled (conventionalized) "pragmaticalizations", most especially the development of pragmatic enrichments often associated with new uses of more contentful material as "pragmatic markers", "discourse markers", or "comment clauses" in new positions in a clause or intonation unit. The left periphery of the clause or intonation unit in English is often associated with subjective material (e.g. topic marking and epistemic modals), and the right periphery with intersubjective marking (e.g. question tags). (Traugott (2012: 561)

[5] My emphasis.

Traugott's remark on the syntactic position of these markers (left periphery of the clause) is quite telling. Indeed, *really* used in utterance-initial position as an adverb with linguistic function allows the speaker to convey a necessarily subjective metadiscursive comment. Defour (2012: 89) shares this view and adopts a similar stance: “These adverbials acquire increasingly subjective and pragmatic functions with a broader scope, when placed in marginal syntactic positions, through a pragmaticalization process”. (Defour, 2012: 89)

It could therefore be said of *really* that in some of its uses are close to that of discourse markers, not only through syntax, but also through the process of subjectification it has undergone. However, it does not really function as a discourse marker in its own right, at least not yet, in that it still retains too much of its semantic content. Indeed, discourse markers undergo a very advanced process of semantic bleaching, making it (almost) impossible to retrieve their initial meaning, as in the case of *well* or *so* used as discourse markers for example. Their intensifying force and initial semantic content have completely faded away. Lamiroy & Swiggers (1991: 121) confirm the loss of semantic content when pragmatic functions are assigned and speak of "functional 'displacement' with a diachronic emptying of their meaning" (Lamiroy & Swiggers, 1991: 121). The way *really* functions today in some of its uses would give it a hybrid status between an adverb with linguistic function, which emphasizes the speaker's subjective perception of reality, and a discourse marker.

Conclusion

After justifying the meanings of grammaticalization and pragmaticalization that I wished to retain for my analysis of *really*, I explained the diachronic evolution of the adverb. While it was initially an adverb of manner, it has evolved into an intensifying adverb through a process of grammaticalization/lexicalization and has finally acquired metadiscursive functions and uses that bring it closer to the functioning of a discourse marker. I have shown that interpreting the semantic content of *really* is not an easy task, depending on the syntactic position of this intensifier, and have opted for an approach that takes account of the dual meaning of this marker. In fact, in all these uses, the original semantic content referring to reality and intensification may be said to coexist. *Really* has also undergone the early stages of a pragmaticalization process, in the sense that it conveys the subjectivity of the speaker and displays greater syntactic autonomy than the intensifier. However, it cannot yet be considered a fully-fledged discourse marker, as it retains too much of its initial semantics, which keeps it at the interface of lexicon and grammar. No one can predict what will happen to *really*, as it lies in the transition zone between lexicon and grammar, but it can be assumed that it is likely to evolve into a fully-fledged discourse marker if it reaches sufficient semantic bleaching, given that other intensifiers such as *so*, *right* or *well*, have acquired pragmatic functions following the same evolution pattern.

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