The diachronic evolution of Italian *mica*: Discourse strategies and language change

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The paper studies the diachronic development of the Italian particle *mica* from a usage-based perspective. *Mica* originates in a free noun denoting a small quantity (Latin MICA(M) 'crumb'), developed into a negation particle and, as claimed in this paper, into a pragmatic particle. The aim of the paper is twofold. First, it deals with the question in which contexts the shift from one use to another may have occurred and which discursive elements may have motivated the change. The analysis is based on the hypothesis that the change is triggered by rhetorical strategies of the speaker which sediment into new meaning components. The paper tries to provide evidence for this hypothesis with reference to historical data as well as an analysis of the discourse functions of *mica* in present-day Italian. The second aim of the paper is to show that, contrary to what has been claimed in previous studies, the use of *mica* has developed in a way that is quite different from the development described in a negation cycle. Its evolution appears to go beyond the process of grammaticalization as a negation marker. The paper argues that *mica* did not only turn from a lexical into a grammatical item, but – more interestingly – that the negation particle further developed into a pragmatic particle. The latter is characterized by particular discourse functions and can be more specifically described as modal particle.

KEYWORDS: pragmatic particle, modal particle, *mica*, language change, subjectification, grammaticalization, Italian.

1. Introduction

The paper deals with the diachronic development of the Italian particle *mica*. The latter is usually described as a postverbal negation marker which is used in specific contexts, especially in informal situations. Going back to Latin MICA(M) ('crumb'), its original meaning refers to a minimal quantity, such as French and Catalan *pas* (< Latin PASSU(M) 'step'). It thus originates in a noun which was used to reinforce negation. First evidences of *mica* reinforcing negation can be found in Pre-Classical and Classical Latin. Previous studies assume that it further developed into a polarity item with particle-like status and later became grammaticalized as negative particle proper (Hansen & Visconti 2012: 459-466). In most stud-

ies, the development of *mica* from Latin to Modern Italian is related to Jespersen's proposal on sentential negation renewal (Jespersen 1917), the so-called Jespersen Cycle (Dahl 1979: 88). The aim of this paper is twofold. First, I would like to retrace the evolution of *mica*, focusing on the question in which contexts the shift from one use to another may have occurred and which discursive elements may have triggered the change. I will try to show that there is evidence that the change was triggered by the use of specific discourse strategies. Second, I would like to argue that the use of *mica* has developed in a way that is quite different from the development described in a negation cycle and that its evolution goes beyond the process of grammaticalization as a negation marker. I will try to show that *mica* did not only turn from a lexical into a grammatical item, but that the negation particle further developed into a pragmatic particle. The latter can be related to particular discourse functions and can be more specifically described as modal particle.

2. The evolution of Italian mica: State of the art

Visconti (2009) and Hansen & Visconti (2009, 2012) have studied the development of *mica* from a diachronic perspective. Visconti (2009) and Hansen & Visconti (2009) provide a systematic study of the syntactic properties and the discourse contexts of the use of *mica* throughout the centuries, starting from the 13th century. In particular, they examine the relationship between *mica* and the preceding (and following) co-text. They relate their analysis to the textual dimension of givenness and argue that the development of *mica* is conditioned by information structural factors, in particular the discourse-old status of the negated proposition.[1] In this context, they identify different types of relationships between *mica* and the adjacent co-text (see also Visconti 2007). Visconti (2009) provides a detailed quantitative analysis of a diachronic corpus of literary texts dating from the 13th to the 20th century as well as synchronic conversation data and Italian newsgroup messages. The analysis shows that in a majority of cases, especially in dialogic contexts, the negated proposition is not explicitly evoked in the preceding co-text, but is inferred from the discourse context. The frequency of cases with explicit evocation actually decreases throughout the centuries and is of less than 3% in the 19th and 20th century data. Visconti argues that the decrease in explicit evocation is linked to an increase in intersubjectivity (in the sense of Traugott 2003, 2010) in the dia-

chronic development of *mica*. The use of *mica* would thus have shifted from a textual mode, pertaining to the level of text-construction, to an interpersonal mode, centered on the speaker-hearer interaction. This hints at the development of specific pragmatic functions. The analysis presented in this paper shall provide further evidence for the hypothesis that *mica* developed into a pragmatic particle and, in particular, try to explain which factors may have triggered this change.

Visconti (2009: 939) claims that the development of *mica* as a negation particle can be described as fitting Jespersen's (1917) proposal on sentential negation renewal in analogy to the development of French *pas*. According to Jespersen's proposal, subsequently labeled Jespersen's Cycle (Dahl 1979: 88),

> [t]he original negative is first weakened, then found insufficient and therefore strengthened, generally through some additional word, and this in turn may be felt as a negative proper and may then in course of time be subject to the same development as the original word. (Jespersen 1917: 4)

This description fits the evolution of French clause negation from a preverbal negator *non* in Classical Latin (*non dico*) to a phonetic reduction of the preverbal negator (*je ne dis*) and a (first optional) addition of a postverbal element (*je ne dis pas* (*mie*/*point*)). The reinforced negation *ne ... pas* thus gradually evolved into the unmarked form of negation in French. In colloquial French the negation further developed to a stage where the preverbal negator *ne* becomes optional (*je (ne) dis pas*), possibly indicating a future evolution without any preverbal element and *pas* as exclusive negation marker (*je dis pas*). Contrary to Visconti's (2009: 939) claim, the evolution of Italian *mica* is different from this evolution and cannot be described as fitting Jespersen's Cycle. In both cases, French *pas* and Italian *mica*, the negation particle goes back to nouns denoting small quantities (Italian *mica* 'crumb', French *pas* 'step'). However, the evolution of Italian *mica* clearly differs from the evolution of the French negation particle *pas*. In their comparative description of the evolution of standard negation in French and Italian, Hansen & Visconti (2012) relate both of them to Jespersen's Cycle. They assume that the evolution in both languages follows the same pattern, but that they differ with respect to their current stage in the cycle. They then try to find reasons why the expression of negation in French evolved so much more rapidly than in Italian. One possible reason is that no phonetic weakening of the preverbal negator *non* has taken place in Italian

(Hansen & Visconti 2012: 457). This, I would argue, supports the hypothesis that the evolution of Italian negation is not in accordance with Jespersen's Cycle as described above, i.e. that the cycle did not even start (see also Garzonio & Poletto 2014). An alternative explanation might be a pragmatic one as proposed by Meillet (1921) prior to the publication of Jespersen's work. According to Meillet, the addition of a postverbal negator and thus the evolution of standard negation arise from the intention to intensify the expression (cf. Hansen & Visconti 2012: 457-458). This actually points toward the account I would like to argue for in this paper, namely that the change originates in a rhetorical strategy of the speaker. This, however, is independent from Jespersen's Cycle and from the evolution of standard negation as it is explained by this cycle. On the contrary, the Italian particle *mica* is clearly associated to specific discourse functions (e.g. Cinque 1991, Manzotti & Rigamonti 1991, Zanuttini 1997, Thaler 2016) and is far from developing into an unmarked form of negation how Jespersen's Cycle would predict it.

Previous studies on the evolution of *mica* have thus focused on syntactic and information-structural properties as well as similarities to and differences from the evolution of standard negation as described in Jespersen's Cycle. The present paper shall more particularly focus on the contexts in which *mica* occurs and on the relevance of these contexts for the diachronic evolution of *mica*. It tries to explain, from a usage-based perspective, WHY the described changes might have taken place. In this context, the paper further intends to show that it is not sufficient to describe the evolution of *mica* within a negation cycle, i.e. its evolution as a negation marker, but that its development at later stages is better described as a development toward a pragmatic particle with specific discourse functions.

3. Method and data

One of the methodological problems of historical linguistics is that the study of older stages of language is necessarily based on its representation in written documents. The study of language change is usually considered an empirical discipline, i.e. it depends on the analysis of data. However, the notion of 'data' in this context is somewhat problematic (Fitzmaurice & Smith 2012: 19). Data is available only in written form, whereas language change is likely to arise in spoken interaction. This implies that the evolution of language is reconstructed from indirect sources. As Fischer (2004: 730-731) puts

it, the study of written historical documents can provide only "hints as to what causes variation and change, hints about the mechanisms that play a role in change; hints about what speakers do, what (and why) they make a change". The present paper thus does not claim to give clear-cut empirical evidence for the motives of change in the evolution of Italian *mica* but rather intends to provide hints about what speakers (and writers) did when using *mica* at different stages of its evolution. The fact that the analysis only relies on written documents further implies that it is difficult to find out at which time the change from one use to another took place. The first occurrence of a phenomenon in the available written sources does not necessarily indicate that the use in oral discourse began at that time. Ocampo (2006: 311) notes, with reference to Menéndez Pidal (1950), that an element in language use may remain invisible for many centuries because it has not been documented. My aim in this paper is thus not to make a precise temporal reconstruction of the evolution of *mica*, i.e. to determine exactly at what time the change from one stage to another occurred, but rather to provide some evidence (in the sense specified above) for a plausible explanation of how the change might have been motivated. I therefore try to identify in which communicative contexts and for which socially relevant actions *mica* was typically used and how these contexts and actions changed throughout its evolution. I hypothesize that there are five stages in the evolution of *mica* and that each of them is characterized not only by specific syntactic and semantic restrictions, but also by specific contexts of use. The stages will be described in more detail in section 5. The analysis is based on historical data from the corpora **TLIO** (*Tesoro della Lingua Italiana delle Origini*) and **BIZ** (*Biblioteca Italiana Zanichelli*) as well as present-day conversation data from the **C-ORAL-ROM** corpus (*Integrated Reference Corpora for Spoken Romance Languages*). Examples from the latter have been transcribed according to the conventions of **GAT 2** (cf. Appendix). The analysis partly also refers to the synchronic use of *mica* in spoken interaction, assuming that its discourse functions in present-day use can partly be traced back to earlier stages and can help us to explain why *mica* has developed in a certain way. I shall thus start with a brief overview of discourse functions of *mica* in present-day Italian in section 4.

The analysis does not take into consideration dialectal variations of *mica* (*miga, minga, mia, mina*, etc.).[2] It is restricted to occurrences of the form *mica* in the corpora mentioned above. In the historical data, it mainly (but not exclusively) appears in Tuscan dialects. The analysis of present-day data only considers Standard Italian,

although with regional variations as they appear in the conversations.

4. The synchronic view: Discourse functions of mica

Synchronic studies have revealed specific discourse functions and specific contexts for the use of *mica* in spoken interaction. My hypothesis is that some of these functions and contexts can be traced back to earlier stages in the development of *mica*. In what follows, I shall give a brief overview of relevant discourse functions and discursive contexts of *mica* in present-day Italian.

4.1. Counter-expectation / Disaffiliation

According to Cinque (1991), *mica* can be associated with a specific kind of presupposition, more specifically with counter-expectation on the part of the speaker and/or the hearer. What is denied by the use of *mica* is contrary to the speaker's and/or the hearer's expectations. For example, in an utterance like *Non è mica freddo, qua dentro* ('It's not [*mica*] cold in here') the speaker presupposes that the hearer (and/or the speaker) had the expectation that it would be cold in here (Cinque 1991: 314-315). Cinque's analysis has been adopted in other works and formulated in slightly different ways by different scholars, all referring to some kind of counter-expectation. According to Bernini & Ramat (1996: 17), by the use of *mica* "the speaker presupposes that whatever he is denying is on the contrary considered true or understood to be realizable by his interlocutor". Zanuttini (1997) notes in her study on the syntax of negation that "the occurrence of *mica* is pragmatically restricted to those contexts in which the non-negative counterpart of the proposition expressed by the sentence is assumed in the discourse" (Zanuttini 1997: 61). For example, in a sentence like *Gianni non ha mica la macchina* ('Gianni hasn't [*mica*] got a car'), *mica* can only be uttered felicitously if the proposition that Gianni has a car is entailed by the common ground. This account has been criticized, among others, by Schwenter (2002, 2003, 2006) who argues that it fails to distinguish between non-canonical and canonical negatives, assuming that negatives are always uttered in a context where the speaker assumes the hearer's belief in the corresponding affirmative.[3] Schwenter further argues that such an account refers to concepts like the one of common ground which is not clearly defined (Schwenter 2003: 1002). If common ground is to be understood as the set of propositions that the interlocutors hold in common to be true, then the characterization that the corresponding affirmative

is "entailed by common ground" (Zanuttini 1997: 61) is too weak. In addition, prior belief in the corresponding affirmative proposition is not a necessary condition for the use of *mica*. *Gianni non ha mica la macchina* ('Gianni hasn't [*mica*] got a car') can be uttered felicitously, at least in certain contexts, even if neither the speaker nor the hearer believes that Gianni has a car (cf. Schwenter 2006: 335-336).

The idea of counter-expectation has been specified in an interactional analysis of *mica* including the larger sequential environment of its use (cf. Thaler 2016). The sequential analysis shows that *mica* is typically used in disaffiliative contexts, i.e. in turns that express disaffiliation with prior talk.[4] These are often dispreferred second pair parts or other kinds of next or responsive actions that do not follow the preference established by the preceding talk.[5] *Mica* can also be used in first pair parts that are disaffiliative with what has been established in the prior interaction. More specifically, the utterance containing *mica* is disaffiliative in one of the following ways (Thaler 2016: 55).

(a) It expresses an opinion that contradicts the opinion of one of the other participants or gives an account to such a contradiction;

(b) it describes a state of affairs that is not in line with the hearer's expectations or, more precisely, with the speaker's expectation about the hearer's expectations (second order expectation), or it gives an account to the expression of such a state of affairs;

(c) it delays the conditional relevance established by a prior turn, e.g. by means of an interruptive question;

(d) the speaker gives an answer that does not provide the information asked for.

It will be argued in section 5 that some kind of disaffiliation can also be found at earlier stages of the development of *mica* and might have been pragmatically relevant for the change from one use to another.

4.2. Emotive involvement

The use of *mica* can further be related to a specific kind of emotive involvement (Thaler 2016: 58-61). The emotive character of turns including the use of *mica* can be traced back to the speaker's negative stance toward certain elements of the current interaction. More specifically, there is evidence that the speaker feels uncomfortable in

the current interaction, either because of knowledge asymmetry or because he believes that the hearer makes a wrong assumption. In the case of knowledge asymmetry, the emotive involvement is typically caused (a) by an imbalance between the knowledge the speaker is expected to have and the knowledge he actually has in the given situation, or (b) by an imbalance between the speaker's knowledge and the knowledge which is required in the current course of interaction. As to the second case, i.e. the speaker's belief that the hearer makes a wrong assumption, the wrong assumption can concern (a) the speaker's prior talk, (b) an issue that is related to the speaker's talk, or (c) both of them.[6] The emotive involvement is reflected in the sequential organization, the way the speaker constructs his turn and, in most cases, in the use of emotive framing devices (Caffi & Janney 1994: 354), i.e. specific lexical, syntactic and prosodic devices indicating emotive involvement (for more details cf. Thaler 2016: 58-61).

4.3. Contextualization

In his works on non-canonical forms of negation in Romance languages, Schwenter (2002, 2003, 2005, 2006) argues that the choice of non-canonical negatives (such as Italian *mica*, Catalan *pas* and Brazilian Portuguese post-verbal *não*) is regulated by information-structural factors. According to his account, the use of *mica* is licensed only when the proposition being negated constitutes salient discourse-old information. In an interactional analysis of the use of *mica* in discourse, Thaler (2016: 62) argues that referring back to discourse-old information actually is not an end in itself, but appears to fulfill a specific function in discourse. It relates the current utterance to a particular aspect of context, indicating what is relevant for the interpretation of the utterance. It provides the utterance with the context in which it can be interpreted and thus anchors the message in the communicative situation. This is close to what Gumperz (1982, 1992) calls "contextualization cues". The piece of context the utterance is related to can be discourse-old information, but can also concern other elements of context such as previous knowledge on the part of the hearer, non-verbal context that is perceptually available to the speaker and the hearer, or any other kind of discursive information that is part of the context. Examples will be given in section 5.

4.4. Metapragmatic instruction

It has further been argued that *mica* can be characterized as expressing a kind of metapragmatic instruction from the speaker to the hearer, directing the hearer to update common ground (see Thaler

2016: 65-66).[7] The hearer is instructed to integrate the information given in the utterance containing *mica* as a relevant piece of information in the current interaction. The speaker indicates that, even though his contribution is disaffiliative, it is important to take it into account (and to relate it to a specific aspect of context that is relevant for its interpretation). The instruction is supported by the speaker's emotive involvement. The fact that the speaker feels uncomfortable because of an imbalance of information or because of his belief that the hearer makes a wrong assumption (see (2) above) makes it even more relevant for the hearer to take the information into consideration. The instructive function can be seen as part of the discursive meaning of *mica*. If *mica* is used in an assertion, the proposition expressed is not only asserted but the hearer is instructed to take the proposition into account, to add the proposition to common ground. An example will be given in section 5. If *mica* is used in a question, the speaker does not only attempt to elicit the information from the hearer, but instructs him to update common ground, i.e. to integrate the information that the speaker does not know but needs to know the answer as a relevant piece of information (see Thaler 2016: 65-66). Of course, an instruction function of that kind as well as the contextualization function can also be ascribed to other kinds of linguistic expressions. What is characteristic for the use of *mica*, however, is the specific combination of the functions and discourse contexts described in this section.

5. *The diachronic development of* mica

The aim of the following is to retrace the evolution of *mica* from Pre-Classical Latin to present-day Italian. The analysis shall focus on the question in which contexts and which functions *mica* was used at the different stages of its evolution and if these can be related to possible motivations for the change. Detges & Waltereit (2002, 2009, 2016), Waltereit & Detges (2007) and Waltereit (2007, 2012) have shown that there is strong evidence that pragmatic particles arise as a side effect of strategic language use by speakers.[8] Speakers use rhetorical strategies to solve different kinds of communicative problems. The new (and first unusual) meaning component initially is a mere inference. If the inference becomes conventionalized by frequent usage, it turns into the new meaning of the respective particle (Waltereit & Detges 2007: 76). The meaning of the particle in present-day use thus reflects earlier discourse patterns.

The synchronic function of the particle is a by-product of the type of strategy it was used for at earlier stages of its development. This has been shown for different kinds of pragmatic particles like the Italian discourse marker *guarda* (Waltereit 2002), the French modal particle *bien* and the Spanish discourse marker *bien* (Waltereit & Detges 2007, Detges & Waltereit 2009, Waltereit 2012) as well as the French discourse markers *bon ben* and *enfin bref* (Waltereit 2007). My analysis is based on the hypothesis that the evolution of Italian *mica* is also triggered by discourse strategies of the speaker which sediment into new meaning components. I will try to retrace these strategies by an analysis of the historical data and by relating them to the discourse functions of *mica* in present-day use as described in section 4. Obviously, the stages described rest on a simplification. The development from one stage to the other has to be understood as gradual in the sense that old and new uses can coexist synchronically for a certain time in a relationship known as "layering" (Hopper 1991: 22-24).

5.1. Stage 0

Mica originates in a free noun denoting a small quantity (Latin MICA(M) 'crumb'). First evidences of *mica* reinforcing negation can be found in Pre-Classical and Classical Latin in contexts like the one in example (1) (cf. Hansen & Visconti 2012: 459).

(1) *quinque dies aquam in os suum non coniecit*, *non* micam *panis*. (Petronius, Satyricon, 1st century AD)
'For five days he did not put water in his mouth, not a crumb of bread'.

It has been assumed that, at that time, *mica* in negative contexts was typically used with semantically compatible verbs like verbs of eating and giving ('he didn't eat a crumb', 'he didn't give me a crumb') (Hopper 1991: 26, cf. also Garzonio & Poletto 2008: 64). We can, however, also find early examples of *mica* reinforcing negation where *mica* is used in a figurative sense, like in example (2).[9]

(2) *Quintia formosa est multis. mihi candida, longa,*
recta est: haec ego sic singula confiteor.
totum illud formosa nego: nam nulla venustas,
nulla in tam magno est corpore mica *salis.*
(Gaius Valerius Catullus, Carmen 86, 1st century BC)
'Quintia is beautiful to many; to me she is pretty, tall,
and slim: I admit each of these things.
But I deny the overall judgement of "beautiful". For there is no grace,
no grain of salt in such a big body'.

Mica salis ('a grain of salt') is here used in a context where the lack of salt is associated to an unattractive, uninteresting person (*nulla in tam magno est corpore mica salis* 'there is no grain of salt in such a big body').

5.2. Stage 1

It can be assumed that *mica* had lost its nominal properties by the medieval period[10] and was then used as an emphatic postverbal marker (Hansen & Visconti 2012: 459-561), like in the examples (3-5). Its original lexical meaning of (extremely) small quantity is extended to the meaning of extreme degrees in general.[11] It is thus typically used as an intensifier in the sense of 'not at all'. This stage can be associated with what Diewald (2002) calls "untypical contexts". *Mica* is no longer used in its original nominal meaning, but has acquired an independent meaning which is compatible with a much wider range of contents. This new meaning can still be described as propositional since it is modifying the proposition expressed by indexing an extreme degree of the state of affairs described, but it also has an expressive component in the sense that it expresses a subjective evaluation of what is said.

(3) *Una figliuola avevano intro loro due che bene somegliava dal padre; e a la madre si corrucciava spessamente per la folle contenenza ch'elle aveva in sé: ché bene se n'avedeva. E mantenevasi in bene fare, ma tuttavolta serviva la madre di ciò ch'ella le comandava in bene, e sì aveva I suoi fatti contra cuore. Ma la madre no· ll'amava né* mica, *perch'ella non si manteneva nella sua vita: ché 'l pazzo non ha cura del savio, perch'elli non fa le pazzi co· llui insieme. l'uno folle si vuole adunare coll'altro, e 'l savio col savio*. (Conti morali d'anonimo senese (ed. Segre), XIII ex. (sen.), 11 [TLIO])
'They had a daughter together who looked very much like her father; and the mother was often upset because of her behavior: she was well aware of it. And she tried to behave well, even if she did what her mother told her to do, she still did it unwillingly. But the mother did not love her [*mica*] because she did not follow her in her way of living: The madman does not care about the wise man because the latter does not do crazy things together with him. The madman wants to join another madman, and the wise man another wise man'.

(4) *E quand'elli vuoe, sì fa cantare quelli ucelli come a llui piace e poi riguarda anco la donzella, che vestita era d'un troppo ricco sciamito vermiglio, gonnella e mantello, e avea una cintula, che n'era cinta. E quella cintula senssa falla era bene la più ricca e la più nobile che Breus avesse mai veduto in tutto lo suo tempo, e pendeavi una borsa, che nonn era* mica *la più laida ch'elli avesse veduta, ansi era la più bella ch'elli mai avesse trovata*. (Trattato di virtù morali, XIII/XIV (tosc.), cap. 10 [TLIO])
'And whenever he wants, he makes these birds sing how he likes it and then he looks at the girl who is wearing a kind of red velvet that is a bit too bright, a skirt and a coat, and a belt that surrounded her waist. And this belt without any flaw was the richest

and most precious one that Breus had ever seen in his whole life, and there was a bag attached to it which was not [*mica*] the most ugly one he had ever seen, it was rather the most beautiful one that he had ever seen'.

(5) *e perciò dice il filòsafo, che le rendite né le possessioni non potrebbero essere eguali, se i figlioli non fussero eguali, cioè che tanti figliuoli avesse l'uno, quanto l'altro; e questo non può essere, come noi vedemo, che alcuno non à né* mica*, e se n'à, sì n'à pochi; ed alcun altro n'à molti figliuoli, ed alcuno altro non à né* mica *donna; e perciò la legge che Falleo dicea, non potrebbe esser guardata, e dunque non è buona.* (Reggimento de' principi di Egidio Romano, 1288 (sen.), L. 3, pt. 1, cap. 12 [TLIO])
'So the philosopher says that neither the earnings nor the possessions can be equal if the children are not equal, i.e. if one has as many children as the other; and that is not possible, as we will see, that someone does not [mica] have children, and if he does, he has few; and another one has many children, and still another does not [*mica*] have a wife; and that's why Falleo's law cannot be maintained and thus is not good'.

As the examples show, *mica* seems to have acquired a kind of scalar meaning at this stage, presupposing a scale of things, qualities or states of affair and referring to the endpoint of that scale. For example, the extract in (3), which is part of a description of the relationship between a mother and her daughter, presupposes different degrees of loving someone. Even if the daughter made an effort to obey her mother, the latter did not love her at all (*no· ll'amava né mica*). The utterance containing *mica* describes an extreme state of affairs, referring to the negative endpoint of the presupposed scale of different degrees of loving someone. Example (4) is part of the description of a beautiful girl who is wearing beautiful clothes and has a beautiful bag. The description refers to different degrees of beauty and explicitly mentions the endpoints of the presupposed scale (*la più laida* 'the most ugly one', *la più bella* 'the most beautiful one'). In *nonn era mica la più laida ch'elli avesse veduta* the negative end of the scale is negated in order to refer to the positive counterpart (in the sense of a double negation), i.e. to intensify the positive evaluation. *Mica* is in this case combined with the use of the superlative. The co-occurrence of the superlative and intensifying *mica* reinforces the scalar effect. As in the previous example, *mica* appears in a context where a subjective evaluation of the respective items or states of affairs is expressed. In example (5), having no children at all (*non à né mica*) can be seen as the negative endpoint of the scale representing the number of children a person can have, ranging from 0 to n. In the second occurrence of *mica* in example (5), the scalar interpretation is not so obvious (*alcuno altro non à né mica donna* 'another one does not [*mica*] have a wife') since at least in Western Europe a man usually does not have more than one wife. In the given context, we

could, however, see a scale in relation with the number of children which is central for the argumentation of the author (wife and children – wife, no children – no wife, no children).

How can we explain the emergence of the emphatic and mostly scalar meaning component of *mica*? I would like to claim that the effect of intensification can be related to a rhetorical strategy. The speaker underlines the extreme state of affairs in order to highlight specific elements of his discourse. The speaker is more informative than required. According to Detges & Waltereit (2002), this strategy can be described as a rhetorical rule of the following type:

> If you want to express in a strong way that some state of affairs did not take place at all, say that the state of affairs in question did not even take place to the smallest degree imaginable. In order to do so, take the negative form of the predicate and combine it with some direct or cognate object-NP which expresses the SMALLEST CONCEIVABLE QUANTITY affected or brought about by the state of affairs in question. (Detges & Waltereit 2002: 177)

Such a strategy implies the speaker's evaluation of what is said. Even if it is not the same kind of evaluation as for the use of *mica* in present-day Italian (see section 4), *mica* can already be related to the speaker's stance toward certain elements of the current interaction and thus to some kind of emotive involvement. In many cases, when using *mica*, the speaker wants to convey unusual or unexpected information. This is clearly the case in the examples (3) and (5) when the author describes a mother who does not love her daughter (example 3) or when, while discussing the question of how the possessions can be equally divided among the children, the author evokes the case that someone does not even have a wife (and thus no children) (example 5). In example (4), the unusual or unexpected character of the information conveyed seems to be used strategically. The beauty of the bag is not unusual or unexpected per se, but the speaker rhetorically points to an unusual character by the use of *mica*. The rhetorical effect of what the speaker wants to convey is thus stronger than it would be without the use of *mica*. The rhetorical use of the strategy presupposes that the use is not completely new, that it is already associated to the intensification of unusual or unexpected information. What we can see in the examples is that, already at this stage, the use of *mica* is somehow linked to the speaker's (and the hearer's) expectations. In the synchronic use, the use of *mica* can be associated to counter-expectation on the part of the speaker and/or the hearer and to a disaffiliative character of the utterance, as explained in section 4. It can be hypothesized that the use of

mica in the context of unusual or unexpected information at this early stage of its evolution already points toward some kind of disaffiliation (or counter-expectation) which was later conventionalized as part of its pragmatic meaning.

We can assume that at this stage *mica* is not yet grammaticalized as negation marker. In the 13th century, its use as an intensifier is not yet restricted to negative contexts, even though there is a clear preference for using it to underscore negative rather than positive content.[12] Furthermore, the analysis shows that in the 13th century it is used in a variety of constructions, ranging from *né mica*, *no ... mica* and *non ... mica* to *mica non* and *non ... né mica*. This variety is reduced in the further development when *mica* is conventionalized as a negation marker proper. In the 14th century we already find a clear preference for *non ... mica* and *né mica* in the analyzed data.[13] The conventionalization of *mica* as a negation particle marks the transition to the next stage of its development.

5.3. Stage 2

In its further development, *mica* is still used as an emphatic postverbal marker, but in contexts which exclude a scalar interpretation. From the 14th century we find an increasing number of cases of that kind. In contrast to the uses described at stage 1, *mica* does not refer to the endpoint of a scale, but to non-gradual states of affairs, like in the examples (6-9). Again in contrast to the use at stage 1, where *mica* still had propositional meaning, it does not change the utterance's truth conditions at this stage anymore. This points toward an emphasis on pragmatic functions in the development of *mica*.

(6) *Disse allora Pirro: «Non farnetico no, madonna: Non credete voi che io veggia?»*
     Nicostrato si maravigliava forte, e disse: «Pirro veramente io credo che tu sogni.» Al
     quale Pirro rispose: «Signor mio, non sogno né mica*, né voi anche non sognate, anzi*
     vi dimenate ben sì, che se così si dimenasse questo pero, egli non ce ne rimarrebbe sù
     niuna.» (Boccaccio, Decameron, c. 1370, VII, 9 [TLIO])
     'Then Pirro said: "No, I don't fantasize, my lady: Don't you believe that I can see?"
     Nicostrato was very much surprised and said: "Pirro, I really think that you are
     dreaming". And Pirro replied: "My lord, I am not [*mica*] dreaming, neither are you,
     rather you are moving so much that if this pear tree would move like this, there
     wouldn't be a single pear left on it"'.

(7) *Paura dice: «Quello omo ave molto grande avere». Sicurtade risponde: «Ciò non è nè*
     mica *omo, ma è uno grido pieno di voci».* (Trattato di virtù morali, XIII/XIV (tosc.), cap.
     25 [TLIO])
     'Fear says: "That man has great possessions". Wisdom replies: "That is not [*mica*] a
     man, but a cry full of voices"'.

(8) \LATT.\ *Venitene, che io vo' far sentirvi un caso di fortuna non men pietoso che vero.*
\SPIN.\ *O potta del cielo! costui contraffà bene: so che tu lo carpisti!*
\GUID.\ *Non contraffà* mica*, per quel che da lui n'ho inteso; e credo ch'egli sia il padre di Fabio certo.*
(Anton Francesco Grazzini (Il Lasca), I parentadi, 1582, At. 5, sc. 4, [BIZ])
\LATT.\ 'Come here, I would like to tell you about a stroke of luck that is both pitiful and true'.
\SPIN.\ 'Oh goodness! He is good at cheating: I know that you used a trick to get it!'
\GUID.\ 'He is not [*mica*] cheating, as far as I understood; and I think that he is certainly the father of Fabio'.

(9) *E ancor che fosse stato circa trenta anni schiavo e sopportati mille disagi e divenuto forte vecchio, non di meno non era* mica *tanto disfatto, che a le native fattezze il soldano non lo riconoscesse.* (Matteo Bandello, Novelle, 1554, Parte 3, novella 67 [BIZ])
'And even if he had been a slave for about thirty years and had suffered a lot of pain and labor and had become very old, he was nonetheless not [*mica*] so such exhausted that the sultan could not recognize him'.

As the examples show, *mica* is used to express a contrast to the preceding (and/or the following) utterance. The utterance containing *mica* denies the proposition expressed by the preceding utterance (like in the examples (6) and (8)) or an inference arising from the preceding utterance (like in the examples (7) and (9)). In example (7), *ciò non è nè mica omo* ('that is not [*mica*] a man') denies the presupposition of the preceding utterance (*Quello omo ave molto grande avere* 'that man has great possessions' presupposes that he is a man). Hansen & Visconti (2009: 166) describe inferences of a "presuppositional kind" as one of three different types of inferences that can be denied by utterances containing *mica*. In example (7), the utterance containing *mica* is not only in contrast to the preceding utterance, but also to the following one as indicated by the contrastive conjunction *ma* ('but'). Hansen & Visconti (2009: 157-158) define such uses as "Janus-faced", i.e. standing in contrast to the preceding and at the same time to the following context. In example (9), the utterance containing *mica* (*non era mica tanto disfatto,* 'he was not [*mica*] so much exhausted') denies an inference arising from the preceding context which describes that he has been a slave for about thirty years, had to suffer a lot of pain and labor and therefore has become an old man. This description gives rise to the inference that he is exhausted after these thirty years, an inference that is denied by the utterance containing *mica*. The contrast is emphasized by the use of *non di meno* ('nonetheless') introducing the utterance.

The fact that the utterance containing *mica* is in contrast with the preceding (and/or the following) utterance somehow reminds us of

the disaffiliative character of utterances containing *mica* in present-day spoken Italian (see section 4). The two characterizations are not identical since the latter relies on a sequential analysis of spoken conversation data with conversation-analytic methods. Such methods cannot apply to the written, mostly literary data from the historical corpora. We can still see parallels between the contexts in which *mica* was used at that time and the contexts in which it is used in present-day Italian. There are good reasons to hypothesize that the disaffiliative character is a sedimented residue of contrastive uses of *mica* at an earlier stage of its development. This leads us to the question of what might have motivated speakers to use *mica* in such contexts. My analysis suggests that the use of *mica* in constrastive contexts can be linked to at least two functions.

In many cases it can be seen as part of a strategy of argumentation, mostly in dialogic contexts, expressing the speaker's point of view which is contrary to what has been said (or inferred) before. The utterance is, in this sense, disaffiliative to the prior discourse. The emphatic value of *mica* helps to deny the prior utterance efficiently. A second contrast introduced by *ma* or *anzi* in the following utterance, like in example (7), can be seen as further strengthening the argumentation by emphasizing the positive contrast of the denied utterance.[14]

In other cases, *mica* appears to be used as a rhetorical strategy, mostly in monologic contexts, to create surprise or unexpectedness. In example (9), the description of a slave having suffered a lot of pain and labor creates the expectation of an exhausted person. This expectation is contrasted by the utterance containing *mica* (*non era mica tanto disfatto*). The unexpected relation between the two propositions, which is emphasized by the use of *mica*, can be seen as a kind of rhetorical strategy within the narrative.

There are good reasons to assume that the contrastive (or disaffiliative) character originates in the use of such argumentative or rhetorical strategies which, following Waltereit & Detges (2007: 76), were used to solve communicative problems and were subsequently conventionalized by frequent use.

5.4. Stage 3

Visconti (2009) has examined the relationship between the proposition negated by the use of *mica* and the preceding co-text in data from the 13th to the 20th century. Her study shows a clear decrease of cases where the preceding co-text is explicitly activated (33% in the 14th century *vs* 2.3% in the 20th century) and, vice ver-

sa, an increase of cases where the negated proposition is linked to the preceding clause by inference. This gives rise to the hypothesis that, in the course of time, the reference to the preceding co-text or, more generally, to relevant elements of context, conventionalized as part of the meaning of *mica*. In addition to the results of the study of Visconti (2009), my analysis shows that in some cases the negated proposition is not linked to the preceding clause, not even by inference, but to other elements of context such as an earlier sequence in the conversation, a prior topic, previous knowledge on the part of the hearer, non-verbal context that is perceptually available to the speaker and the hearer, or any other kind of discursive information that is part of the context. This is what has been described as contextualization function in section 4. *Mica* relates the current utterance to a particular aspect of context, indicating what is relevant for the interpretation of the utterance. It provides the utterance with the context in which it can be interpreted. Extract (10) shall give an example.[15]

(10)   (C-ORAL-ROM, ifamdl18, 02:58.07-03:21.53)[16]

```
      001  ALE   e vabbè son le penne più: (0.61) penso più prestiGIOse.
                 uh okay these are the most           I mean the most renowned pens
      002  IDA   sì più presti=   sono di [PLAsti]ca. ((laughs))
                 yes the most renow= they are made of plastic
      003  ALE                           [sì sì.]
                                          yes okay
      004        co:me di PLAstica?
                 what do you mean made of plastic?
      005  IDA   a ME sembrava che fosse di: di::
                 I had the impression that it was made of of
      006        è una penna SFE[ra. ] ((laughs))
                 it is a ball pen
      007  ALE                  [mont] BLAnc.
                                  mont> blanc
      008        (1.07)
-->   009  IDA   non la fanno mica in eh::m:::  in RAdi[ca o qualc eh: era]
                 they don't [mica] make it out of uhm   out of burl  or some  uhm it was
      010  ALE                                         [fanno in n n in  ] qualsiasi formMAto;
                                                        they make them n n in   any shape
      011        penso che (1.3) fanno:: (0.58) ((clear throat)) (0.38) questa [ditta fa solo
                 I think that      they make                              this company only makes
                 penne veramente: preZIOse
                 pens that are really valuable
      012  IDA                                                             [<<pp> no comunque a
                                                                           no anyway
                 me non mi sembrava niente di particoLA]re.
                 they didn't seem very special to me
```

In the example, IDA (from Campania) tells her colleague ALE (from Umbria) that she was given a pen of the brand Mont Blanc for her B.A. degree. When ALE states that pens of this brand are the most valuable pens (line 1), IDA replies that they are actually made of plastic (line 2) and that her pen is an ordinary ball-pen (line 6).

ALE is surprised and repeats that it is a Mont Blanc pen (line 7). As a further argument to underline that the pen is not valuable, IDA says that it is not made of burl or another precious wood (*non la fanno mica in eh::m::: in RAdica o qualc eh:*; line 9). Here, the proposition negated by *mica* (that the pen is made of burl) does not appear in the prior discourse context nor can it be inferred from it. The use of *mica* does, however, relate the utterance to the prior course of interaction, namely to ALE's claim that the pen is valuable, to her own claim that the pen is made of plastic, and to ALE's question in line 4 (*co:me di PLAstica?* 'what do you mean made of plastic?'). It can actually be seen as a second pair part to the question in line 4 which has not been answered in the preceding turns.

We can also find examples dating from the 14th and 15th century where *mica* is used without any (explicit of inferred) reference to the preceding co-text and appears to have acquired contextualization function.

(11) *Poi fu la festa cominciata, quasi come se ciò non appartenesse niente a religione. Non passò* mica *lungo tempo che un uomo di basso affare, che Tiberio Atinio fu chiamato, sognò un sogno, e fugli aviso che Giove gli dicesse, che quegli che la prima danza aveva alla festa menata, gli dispiacque;* (Filippo da Santa Croce, Deca prima di Tito Livio vorgarizzata, 1323 (fior.) [TLIO])
'Then the celebration started, almost as it had nothing to do with religion. Not [*mica*] much time passed until a not very honorable man who was called Tiberio Atinio was dreaming a dream in which Jupiter told him that he did not like the one who had first started to dance at the celebration'.

In example (11), *mica* is used in an utterance introducing a new topic in the narration (*Non passò mica lungo tempo che…*, 'Not much time passed before…'). It can be analyzed as a means to create surprise or unexpectedness in the course of the narration and thus links the utterance to counter-expectations that the author intends to evoke. This reminds us of Cinque's (1991) presuppositional account claiming that what is denied by the use of *mica* is contrary to the speaker's and/or the hearer's expectations (see section 4). The example in (11) can be seen as a rhetorical use of such a presupposition.

The introduction of a new and unexpected topic in example (11) can be seen as expressing a contrast to the preceding discourse. The use in (10), however, does not express a contrastive relation anymore. Contrary to what has been described at stage 2, the use of *mica* at this stage does not necessarily involve a contrastive relation to the preceding (and/or following) utterance anymore. Contrast is only one of the possible relations between the utterance containing *mica* and

its context (and remains the most obvious and a very frequent one). It can be hypothesized that, when the contextualization function becomes conventionalized, it is not limited to contrastive relations anymore.

I would like to argue that *mica* can be described as pragmatic particle at a stage where it has acquired contextualization functions and is devoid of propositional meaning. One of the particle's core functions is to relate the current utterance to a particular aspect of context which can be the preceding co-text, an earlier sequence in the conversation, a prior topic, previous knowledge on the part of the hearer or, especially in spoken discourse, different types of non-verbal context. Its pragmatic function can be further specified as expressing a kind of metapragmatic instruction from the speaker to the hearer. The hearer is instructed to integrate the information given in the utterance containing *mica* as a relevant piece of information in the current discourse (see section 4). The speaker indicates that, even though his utterance is disaffiliative (in the sense described in section 4), it is important to take the proposition into account. For example, in the extract in (10), the proposition that the pen is not made of burl (*non la fanno mica in radica*) is not only asserted but the hearer is instructed to take the proposition into account, to add the proposition to common ground. My hypothesis is that pragmatic functions like these have evolved out of rhetorical strategies at earlier stages and have become conventionalized in their use throughout the centuries.

The pragmatic functions sketched in this section are very similar to the functions of what has been described as modal particles. Modal particles (German *Modalpartikeln* or *Abtönungspartikeln*) typically occur in Germanic languages, especially in German. They have not been defined as a functional class in Italian and other Romance languages yet. However, specific word forms seem to fit the functional characterization and have been described as modal particles in Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese (e.g. Burkhardt 1985, Hansen 1998: 135, Franco 1989, Waltereit & Detges 2007, Detges & Waltereit 2009, Coniglio 2008, Meisnitzer 2012, Meisnitzer & Gerards 2016, Thaler 2017). Modal particles have, for example, been described as expressing the speaker's attitude toward the proposition expressed (e.g. Weydt 1969: 60, Nehls 1989: 283), as anchoring the utterance in its communicative context (e.g. Hentschel & Weydt 1989: 14, Thurmair 1989: 2), as having a "metacommunicative deixis" (Hentschel 1986: 31), modifying the utterance's illocutionary force (e.g. Jacobs 1986, 1991; Waltereit 2001), relating the utterance to prior assumptions (e.g. Brausse 1986: 210) or expressing a

metapragmatic instruction (e.g. Pittner 2007: 73, König & Requardt 1991, König 1991: 180-185, 1997, 2010: 84-90). Diewald (1997) and Diewald & Fischer (1998) argue that modal particles have an indexical function in that they connect the current utterance to something communicatively given, that is, to a proposition at hand. Modal particles thus mark the utterance as non-initial (see also Diewald 1999, 2006, 2007, Fischer 2007). The analysis of my data shows that the use of *mica* as pragmatic particle is compatible with these functional characterizations. On a structural level, modal particles have been described as (a) non-inflecting, (b) syntactically integrated, (c) they cannot occur in initial position, (d) do not have propositional meaning, (e) have sentential scope, and (f) have homophone counterparts in other word classes (Weydt 1969: 66-69, 1977: 218, see also Thurmair 1989 and Hentschel & Weydt 2002, among others).[17] The use of *mica* as pragmatic particle fits all of these criteria except (f) and, in its further development, criterion (c). The latter, however, is controversially discussed and is not accepted by all scholars. Furthermore, from a diachronic perspective, *mica* developed in a way that is quite characteristic for the evolution of modal particles (e.g. Diewald 1999, 2008, 2011, Authenrieth 2002, 2005, Wegener 2002). I cannot discuss the pathways of evolution nor the criteria for the classification of modal particles in more detail in this paper. However, there seem to be good reasons to describe *mica* not only as a pragmatic particle, but more specifically as a modal particle in present-day Italian.

5.5. Stage 4

In more recent developments, *mica* can be found in contexts which are not attested in the data before the 19th century or even before the 20th century. Its distributional restrictions appear to become less specific. New uses include (a) the use of *mica* in interrogative contexts, (b) the clause-initial use of *mica*, and (c) the *non*-deletion in substandard.[18] The question arises whether these developments can also be related to discourse strategies of the speaker. Waltereit (2007: 97-98) argues that a linguistic form which developed into a discourse particle can undergo further developments triggered by the same discourse strategy. The side effect of a specific strategy which leads to the development of a new function is thus further exploited and can result in the development of still other functions. Waltereit (2007: 97) describes this process as 'reiteration', i.e. the same form can undergo the same process of change several times, resulting in polysemous forms. In the case of the evolution of *mica,* we are not necessarily dealing with polysemy but rather with an

extended distribution of the form under consideration. If the evolution of *mica* from a free nominal form to a negation particle to a modal particle was triggered by discourse strategies of the speaker which sedimented into new meaning components, one could argue that the recent distributional extension of the modal particle can, at least partly, be explained by similar processes. I will briefly comment on two of the developments listed above, namely the use of *mica* in interrogative contexts and the clause-initial use of *mica*.

The study of Visconti (2009) does not show any occurrences of *mica* in questions before the 19th century and only two occurrences in the 19th century data (Visconti 2009: 947). In contemporary spoken Italian, the interrogative use of *mica*, like in example (12), is quite common. Its distribution remains restricted, however, in that it is only used in polarity questions.

(12)   (C-ORAL-ROM, ifamcv02, 19:56.86-20:10.95)

```
      001   SRE   IO so= io:: beh posso esprime' la mia:;
                  I am      I mean     I can express my
      002         mi va BEne.
                  for me it's okay
      003   LEO   beh son duemila lire di PIÙ,
                  I mean there are two thousand lire more
      004   IVN   ma COme COme-
                  but how how comes
      005         ma COme mai è venuto duemila lire in più,
                  how comes that there are two thousand more
 -->  006         'un ERA mica settemila in più?
                  wasn't it [mica] seven thousand lire more
      007   SRE   no ascolta sono (0.58) prima pagavamo venticin[que a TESta.          ]
                  no listen     there are     first paid twenty-five per head
      008   LEO                                              [sì appunto viene trenta]DUE
                                                             yes exactly    that makes thirty-two

                  Dinvece di trentaQUAttro,
                  instead of thirty-four
      009         (0.84)
      010   SRE   [eh.]
                  okay
      011   LEO   [sì.]
                  yes
```

The example in (12) is an extract of a discussion between the members of a band who are planning to buy a new sound system.[19] They are talking about a system that is more expensive than the one they were planning to buy earlier. In line 3, LEO mentions that the price difference is 2000 lire (*beh son duemila lire di PIÙ*). In lines 4-6, IVN interrupts the current conversation and asks how the 2000 lire come about (*ma COme mai è venuto duemila lire in più, 'un ERA mica settemila in più?*). Just as in assertive contexts, *mica* indicates to

the hearer that the utterance has to be related to previously uttered (or inferable) information, in this case to the information that a price difference of 7000 lire has been mentioned in an earlier conversation. This serves as an account to the interruptive question of IVN in line 5. The speaker's interruption is justified by the fact that the information given in the preceding turn differs from the speaker's expectation. The latter is based on a piece of information given in an earlier conversation to which the utterance is related by the use of *mica*. *Mica* further emphasizes the relevance of the question in that it expresses a metapragmatic instruction from the speaker to the hearer. The speaker does not only attempt to elicit the information from the hearer, but instructs him to update common ground, i.e. to integrate the information that he does not understand and needs the answer as a relevant piece of information. The use in polarity questions could thus be interpreted as exploiting the positive side effect of the discourse functions which appeared to develop at stage 3, namely the contextualization function and the expression of a metapragmatic instruction from the speaker to the hearer. As at earlier stages, it can be hypothesized that these functions were first used as strategies to solve communicative problems and then conventionalized by frequent use.

When used in requests, *mica* has been assigned a mitigating function associated with politeness (Manzotti & Rigamonti 1991: 284, Visconti 2009: 947). The polite effect of *mica* in requests like *Non hai mica una sigaretta?* ('Don't you [*mica*] have a cigarette?') can be related to the fact that it implies less obligations. According to Cinque (1991: 315), the use of *mica* in polarity questions strengthens the speaker's expectation of a negative answer. This is exploited in requests in that it frees the hearer from the obligation to fulfill the request. The speaker's expectation of a negative answer, in turn, can be related to the contextualization function of *mica*. It is a specific form of contextualization which appears to have conventionalized in polarity questions and results in the mitigating function of *mica* in requests. After the contextualization function had become part of the meaning of *mica* (stage 3), a specific form of contextualization was thus re-exploited in a new use of the particle, namely its use in polarity questions and more specifically in requests.

Another recent development is the use of *mica* in clause-initial position with loss of the negation particle *non*, like in example (13), line 9.[20] According to Visconti (2009: 946), this use appears only in the 20th century, with the exception of one first occurrence in the 19th century data.

(13) (C-ORAL-ROM, ifamdl01, 18:50.70-19:07.10)

```
     001  MIC    ma mamma non è che ne capisce TANto di cinema.
                 but mom   actually doesn't know much about cinema
     002         [hai capi' quindi no- ]
                  y'see        so no
     003  ANT    [sì ECco;          ]
                 yes that's it
     004         quando non va a favo[re SUO la tesi,        ]
                 when the thesis doesn't support your opinion
     005  MIC                        [TU devi (.) no (.) tu- ]
                                      you have to    no    you
     006  MAR                        [era molto espresSIva.  ]
                                      she was very expressive
     007  MIC    no: tu devi discutere con un esPERto.
                 no   you have to talk to an expert
     008         oh io vado al CInema.
                 oh I go to the cinema
-->  009  MAR    oh <<all> ma [mica la possono pensare tutti allo stesso] MO:do> [scusa;  ]
                 oh  but [mica] they can think it all the same way                   sorry
     010  ANT         [<<f> ma il CIn> (.) e:cco.           ]   [e poi il ci]nema
                      but the cin       exactly                 and then the cinema
                 [<<f> non È per gli esperti.>]
                 is not for experts
     011  MIC    [ma il cinema è U:NO        ] e va pensato solo in un mo[do.  ]
                 but there is only one cinema        and it has to be understood only in one way
     012  ANT                                                           [sì nel] TUO.
                                                                        yes in your way
     013  MAR                                                           [non è ] VEro.
                                                                        that's not true
```

Fronted uses like the one in (13) have been associated with a strong emphatic value (Hansen & Visconti 2012: 465). From a syntactic point of view, the clause-initial position, unlike the post-verbal position, is actually a potential focus position (Penello & Pescarini 2008: 51-52). From a pragmatic point of view, my analysis suggests that the emphatic value of fronted *mica* can be related to at least two discursive particularities of *mica*, namely its use in emotive contexts and the expression of a metapragmatic instruction. As briefly described in section 4, the use of *mica* in present-day Italian is characterized by a specific kind of emotive involvement. The latter is linked to the speaker's negative stance toward certain elements of the current interaction. My analysis shows that fronted *mica* often appears in contexts with strong emotive involvement. In example (13), the speaker appears to feel uncomfortable in the interaction because, as we can see in the extract, MIC disagrees with her and does not respect her opinion. Moreover, he discredits her opinion claiming that she does not know much about cinema (*ma mamma non è che ne capisce TANto di cinema*, line 1). MAR's negative evaluative stance toward her son's attitude appears in the emotive character of the utterance. The strong emotive load is not only expressed by the clause-initial use of *mica*, but also by other linguistic features like the interjection *oh*, the evaluative viewpoint marker *ma* ('but'), the quan-

tity device *tutti* ('all') (Caffi & Janney 1991: 358) and, importantly, an increased articulation rate. Furthermore, the clause-initial use of *mica* can be described as an emphasis of the metapragmatic instruction to the hearer. The instruction is supported by the speaker's emotive involvement. It makes it even more relevant for the hearer to take the information into account. It can thus be hypothesized that the use of *mica* in initial position arose in situations with a particularly high emotive involvement in which the speaker wanted to emphasize his instruction to the hearer to update common ground. One of the strategies that are supposed to have triggered the evolution of the modal particle *mica* is thus re-exploited and results in the emergence of a new use.

6. Discourse strategies and theories of language change

The aim of this paper is to retrace the diachronic development of Italian *mica* and, more specifically, to show that the described changes originate in rhetorical strategies of the speaker. Another question would be whether the development of *mica*, on a more general level, can be explained within a theory of language change. A number of studies have discussed the question whether the rise of pragmatic particles, modal particles and discourse markers should be described as grammaticalization, pragmaticalization or something else (for an overview see e.g. Degand & Evers-Vermeul 2015). A discussion of this question, however, would necessitate a more detailed examination of these concepts, which goes beyond the scope of this paper. Furthermore, it can be argued that concepts like grammaticalization or pragmaticalization are too general to capture specific pathways and motivations in the evolution of pragmatic particles (cf. Detges & Waltereit 2009: 59) and that they should be redefined as usage-based concepts, i.e. as small-scale events of change which can be traced back to speaker strategies in specific discourse environments (Winter-Froemel 2014). While the concepts of grammaticalization and pragmaticalization aim at rather broad generalizations about language change, the concept of subjectification can be more specifically related to speaker strategies. In what follows, I shall briefly discuss the question whether the evolution of *mica* could be described as a case of subjectification as defined by Traugott (1988, 1989, 1995, 2010). Traugott (1988, 1989) describes three tendencies of semantic-pragmatic change:

> Tendency I: Meanings based in the external described situation >
> meanings based in the internal (evaluative/perceptual/cognitive)
> described situation.
> Tendency II: Meanings based in the external or internal described
> situation > meanings based in the textual and metalinguistic situa-
> tion.
> Tendency III: Meanings tend to become increasingly situated in
> the speaker's subjective belief-state/attitude toward the situation.
> (Traugott 1989: 34-35).

Tendency III has also been described as subjectification
(Traugott 1989, 1995, 2010). Forms that first express primarily con-
crete, lexical, and objective meanings come through repeated use in
local syntactic contexts to adopt increasingly abstract, pragmatic,
interpersonal, and speaker-based functions (Traugott 1995: 32).
Subjectification is often, but not always, involved in grammaticaliza-
tion processes. It can be found in semantic change in general, both
lexical and grammatical (Traugott 1989: 34).[21] In subsequent stud-
ies, the concept of subjectification was complemented by the concept
of intersubjectification (e.g. Traugott & Dasher 2002, Traugott 2003,
2010). In the case of *mica,* we have seen a development from a con-
crete nominal meaning to a metonymic scalar meaning to a (more
abstract) contrastive meaning to a specific pragmatic function. The
emergence of scalar meanings has been related to increasing sub-
jectification (Traugott 1995: 43-44, 2010: 51). The scalar meaning of
mica at stage 1 is not only more abstract than the original nominal
meaning, it is also more subjective in the sense that it expresses the
speaker's attitude toward the situation. Instead of denoting a small
quantity, it denotes a small degree, which implies the speaker's sub-
jective evaluation of the situation.

The contrastive use of *mica* described at stage 2 implies an
expression of the speaker's perspective on the proposition expressed
and its relation to the preceding utterance. I have argued that the use
of *mica* in contrastive contexts can be analyzed as part of a strategy
of argumentation (helping to deny the prior utterance efficiently) or
a rhetorical strategy creating surprise and unexpectedness. Both are
based on the speaker's evaluation of the situation and thus implicitly
express the speaker's perspective on the state of affairs expressed.

The pragmatic functions of *mica* as modal particle have been
described as relating the current utterance to a particular aspect of
context and instructing the hearer to update common ground (stage
3). Both of these functions are intrinsically subjective in the sense
that they are based on the speaker's subjective belief state toward

the hearer's knowledge and expectations. The speaker takes into account what he thinks the hearer's knowledge and expectations to be and what he considers to be relevant for the correct interpretation of what is said. Processes like these have been described as pragmatic strengthening of the subjective stance of the speaker (Traugott 1988, 1995). Pragmatic strengthening is seen as a consequence of the speaker's attempt to increase informativeness to the hearer of what is said. In Traugott's (1995: 49) terms, there is thus a cognitive-communicative motivation behind subjectification. This is quite close to the assumed motivations for language change described in this paper.

Some of the recent developments in the use of *mica* (stage 4) can also be associated with processes of subjectification and/or intersubjectification. The latter, as defined by Traugott (2003: 130), is generally preceded by subjectification and arises out of subjectification. The clause-initial use of *mica* that appears in the 20th century has been described as emphasizing the speaker's emotive involvement as well as the metapragmatic instruction to the hearer (see section 5, stage 4). Since both emotive involvement (as the speaker's negative stance toward certain elements of the current interaction) and the instruction function (based on the speaker's subjective belief state toward the hearer's knowledge and expectations) can be related to subjectivity, the clause-initial use could be seen as indicating further subjectification. Another argument for subjectification could be the syntactic position of *mica*. It has been argued that subjectified elements tend to be positioned at the periphery of a constituent or clause (Traugott 2010: 41, 60). This has been shown for English discourse markers like *indeed, in fact, actually* (Traugott & Dasher 2002) or *I mean* (Brinton 2007). However, this is a purely syntactic argument which does not reveal possible motivations for the related evolution. A more detailed analysis would be required to answer the question whether the position at the periphery can be linked to specific pragmatic environments that might have triggered the change of syntactic position.

The mitigating use of *mica* in requests has been related to a higher degree of intersubjectivity (Visconti 2009: 948). Intersubjectivity, as defined by Traugott (2003: 128)[22], involves the speaker's attention to the hearer as a participant in the speech event. More specifically, it refers to expressions of the speaker's attention to the 'self' of the addressee in both an epistemic sense, and in a more social sense. The use of *mica* in requests emphasizes the speaker's attention of the addressee in that it expresses the speaker's expectation of a negative answer and thus frees the addressee from the obligation to fulfill the request (Visconti 2009: 947-948). In this sense,

the recent developments of *mica* appear to involve intersubjectification, at least for the specific use in requests. It is not clear whether there will be a general tendency toward intersubjectification in future developments of *mica*.

The concept of (inter)subjectification (in the sense of Traugott) can thus, at least partly, be related to speaker strategies as described in this paper. In its original intention, the concept primarily aims at broader generalizations about language change and does not focus on concrete motivations for language change as they appear in specific discourse environments. I would argue, however, that the latter could be integrated in a theory of subjectification by means of a usage-based analysis as it was proposed for the evolution of Italian *mica* in this paper.

7. Conclusion

The paper retraced the evolution of Italian *mica* from a usage-based perspective. The analysis focused on the question in which contexts the shift from one use to another may have occurred and which discursive elements may have triggered the change. I argued that the change originates in discourse strategies of the speaker which sedimented into new meaning components. In accordance with Detges & Waltereit (2002, 2009, 2016), Waltereit & Detges (2007) and Waltereit (2007, 2012) it can be assumed that pragmatic particles typically arise as a side effect of strategic language use by speakers. Speakers use rhetorical strategies to solve different kinds of communicative problems. The new (and first unusual) meaning component initially is a mere inference. If the inference becomes conventionalized by frequent usage, it turns into the new meaning of the respective particle. My analysis provides evidence that the evolution of *mica* throughout the centuries can be explained by similar processes. For example, the shift from *mica* as a free nominal form (stage 0) to its use as an emphatic postverbal marker (stage 1) can be related to the speaker's rhetorical strategy of being more informative than required in order to highlight specific elements of the discourse. As the analysis shows, this typically occurs in situations where the speaker wants to convey unusual or unexpected information. The strategic use implies the speaker's evaluation of what is said and thus already points toward a typical element in the present-day use of *mica*, namely a specific kind of emotive involvement.

The contrastive use at stage 2 appears to be related to at least two discourse functions, namely (1) a strategy of argumentation used

to deny a prior utterance efficiently, mostly in dialogic contexts, and (2) a rhetorical strategy used to create surprise or unexpectedness, mostly in monologic contexts. It can be hypothesized that the contrastive character of *mica* at that stage originates in the use of such strategies. It can be further hypothesized that the disaffiliative character of *mica* in present-day Italian is a sedimented residue of the contrastive use at this earlier stage of its development.

At stage 3, according to my analysis, the contrastive relation expressed by *mica* developed into a contextualization function. It has thus become a general characteristic of *mica* to relate the utterance to a relevant element of context. This can, but does not necessarily, involve a contrastive relation. My analysis suggests that *mica* can be described as pragmatic particle (and more specifically as modal particle) at a stage where it has acquired contextualization functions and is devoid of propositional meaning. Its pragmatic function at this stage can be further specified as expressing a kind of metapragmatic instruction from the speaker to the hearer. The speaker indicates by the use of *mica* that it is important to take the proposition into account even though the utterance is disaffiliative. Again, it can be argued that pragmatic functions like these have evolved out of rhetorical strategies at earlier stages and have become conventionalized in their use throughout the centuries. In more recent developments (stage 4), the use of *mica* as a modal particle appears to be extended, for example to interrogative contexts and to clause-initial occurrences. These new uses might, at least partly, be explained by a reiteration of the same strategies, i.e. a further exploitation of the strategies that led to the emergence of the modal particle.

Contrary to previous accounts (Visconti 2009, Hansen & Visconti 2012), I tried to show that it is not sufficient to describe the evolution of *mica* as part of a negation cycle. The analysis provides evidence that *mica* developed in a way that is quite different from the development described in Jespersen's Cycle. Its evolution appears to go beyond the process of grammaticalization as a negation marker. *Mica* did not only turn from a lexical item into a grammatical item, but further developed into a pragmatic particle. There is no evidence that *mica* might develop into an unmarked form of negation how Jespersen's Cycle would predict it. On the contrary, it developed into a pragmatic particle with particular discourse functions. I argued that the latter can be more specifically described as modal particle.

The question whether the development of *mica* can be explained within a more general theory of language change like a theory of grammaticalization or pragmaticalization could not be discussed in

this paper. From a usage-based perspective, we would need a theory of language change which is based on concrete discourse events, allowing to identify the principles and motives that guide the process of change, as proposed by Winter-Froemel (2014). As the brief discussion in section 6 shows, the concept of subjectification (and intersubjectification) as defined by Traugott (1989, 1995, 2003, 2010) seems to be, at least partly, compatible with a usage-based view of language change and with the processes described in this paper. The question of how a theory of language change can be more systematically related to speaker strategies would require further investigation.

Appendix

Transcription conventions GAT 2
(Selting *et al.* 2009, Couper-Kuhlen & Barth-Weingarten 2011)

SEQUENTIAL STRUCTURE
[   ]   overlap and simultaneous talk
[   ]

PAUSES
(.)   micro pause (up to 0.2 sec. approximately)
(0.5)/(2.0)   measured pause of 0.5/2.0 sec.

OTHER SEGMENTAL CONVENTIONS
:   lengthening by about 0.2-0.5 sec.
::   lengthening by about 0.5-0.8 sec.
:::   lengthening by about 0.8-1.0 sec.
and_uh   cliticization within units

LAUGHTER AND CRYING
((laughs)), ((cries))   description of laughter and crying
<<laughing>>   laughter particles accompanying speech with
                              indication of scope

OTHER CONVENTIONS
((coughs))   non-verbal vocal actions and events
(may I)   assumed wording
-->   refers to a line of transcript relevant in the
                              argument

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Accentuation

SYLlable	focus accent
!SYL!lable	extra strong accent

Final pitch movements of intonation phrases

?	rising to high
,	rising to mid
–	level
;	falling to mid
.	falling to low

Changes in voice quality and articulation, with scope

<<f>	>	forte, loud
<<p>	>	piano, soft
<<all>	>	allegro, fast

Notes

[1]   Their argument is related to the works of Schwenter (2002, 2003, 2005, 2006) on non-canonical forms of negation in Romance languages. Schwenter argues that the use of non-canonical negative forms (such as Italian *non … mica*) is licensed only when the proposition being negated constitutes salient discourse-old information.

[2]   *Mica* and its related forms are frequently used as negation markers in Northern Italian dialects, e.g. *miga / minga / miŋga* in Milanese or *mia / mina* in Venetian (cf. Garzonio & Poletto 2008: 62, Garzonio 2008: 117). For a syntactic and semantic analysis of *mica* (*mia / mina*) in Venetian dialects see e.g. Penello & Pescarini 2008. In some varieties, it appears to have lost (or nearly lost) its pragmatically marked character and is used as a (nearly) unmarked form of negation (cf. Parry 1996: 229-230, Garzonio & Poletto 2008: 67). In some dialects, it appears in specific uses which are different from its use in Standard Italian. In Milanese, for example, it can be found in imperative forms ([ˈmandʒa ˈmiŋga] 'non mangiare!') or preceded by a gerund in subordinate clauses ([aˈvendola ˈmiŋga leˈdʒyda] 'non avendola letta') (Parry 1996: 251). It would be interesting to study the diachronic development of these forms as well as possible motivations for the respective changes. This, however, goes beyond the aim of this paper.

[3]   For a more detailed analysis of negation see e.g. Givón (1978: 109).

[4]   For the concepts of affiliation and disaffiliation in conversation, see Lindström & Sorjonen (2012).

[5]   For the concept of preference in conversation analysis, see Pomerantz & Heritage (2013).

[6]   For a more detailed characterization and examples of these different cases, see Thaler (2016: 58-61).

7   The instruction given from the speaker to the hearer is metapragmatic in the sense that it refers to the pragmatic conditions of felicitous use of language in the given situations (see the second sense of 'metapragmatics' defined by Caffi 1994). The concept of metapragmatic instruction has also been used in accounts of modal particles, for example in Pittner (2007: 73) in her analysis of the German modal particle *doch* or in König (1991: 180-185, 1997, 2010: 84-90) and König & Requardt (1991) in a relevance-theoretic approach to the analysis of modal particles.

8   Language change that originates in speaker strategies has also been shown for different grammatical categories in a narrow sense (see e.g. Scheibman 2000, Detges 2000, 2004, Detges & Waltereit 2002, Petré 2010, Winter-Froemel 2014).

9   Cf. also the examples in Forcellini 1965 [1771].

10   In some dialects, we still find traces of *mica* as a lexical noun in present-day use, e.g. in the Alpine Lombard variety of Quarna Sotto where the object following the negation with *mia* can appear in the genitive (partitive) case, even if it expresses a singular non-quantifiable entity, like in the following example (cf. Garzonio & Poletto 2009: 144):

[Nə caman mia d   əu te   frial]
NEG call   NEG of the your brother
'They do not call your brother'.

11   The shift from 'small quantity' to 'small degree' or 'extreme degree' can be described as a metonymic shift or as an inference based on a conversational implicature that becomes conventionalized in the inferred meaning.

12   The original semantics of a small quantity seems to invite uses in negative contexts (Hansen & Visconti 2012: 459).

13   As explained in section 3, these observations are based on an analysis of written documents and do not necessarily reflect the use in oral discourse.

14   According to Visconti's (2009) analysis, the use of *mica* in contrastive contexts with *ma* or *anzi* increases from the 13th to the 17th century (see Visconti 2009: 941, footnote 4). This seems to support the hypothesis of a development toward an increasing use of *mica* in contrastive contexts.

15   The conversation data in this and the following examples partly show influences of regional varieties. These, however, are not relevant for the use of *mica* as it appears in the examples.

16   For the transcription conventions in this and the following examples see Appendix.

17   Some other criteria are controversially discussed. For example, some scholars claim that modal particles have to be unstressed (e.g. Weydt 1969: 68, Thurmair 1989: 22), while others include also stressed forms (e.g., Authenrieth 2002, Cardinaletti 2007, 2011, Abraham 2010). It goes beyond the scope of this paper to discuss these criteria in more detail.

18   The use of *mica* within the verb phrase but without accompanying *non* is described as substandard (Manzotti & Rigamonti 1991: 285). I will not discuss this use in more detail in this paper.

19   Two of the speakers (LEO, IVN) are from Tuscany, SRE is from Calabria.

20   The example is taken from a heated discussion between a brother (MIC), a sister (ANT) and their mother (MAR) about the question of what the characteristics of a good actor are. All speakers are from Calabria.

21   More recently, Traugott (2010: 38) has specified that not all grammaticalization is equally likely to involve equal degrees of subjectification and that some may involve little or no subjectification. There is a strong correlation, not an entailment relationship between grammaticalization and subjectification.

22   Besides Traugott's diachronic notion of intersubjectivity and intersubjectification, there are also other interpretations and definitions of the term, for example

Verhagen's (2005, 2007) notion of intersubjectivity grounded in the framework of Cognitive Grammar, or Nuyts's (2001a, 2001b) understanding of intersubjectivity as shared meanings (for an overview, see Ghesquière, Brems & Van de Velde 2012). These notions cannot be discussed in more detail in this paper.

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