

Subjectivity and subjectivisation

Linguistic perspectives

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1 Subjectivity and subjectivisation: an introduction

Edward Finegan

It is in the instance of discourse in which *I* designates the speaker that the speaker proclaims himself as the 'subject'. And so it is literally true that the basis of subjectivity is in the exercise of language . . .

Language is so organized that it permits each speaker to *appropriate to himself* an entire language by designating himself as *I*.

Benveniste (1971:226)

Among linguists and other professional students of language, the word *subject* and its derivative *subjectivity* tend to evoke a grammatical association: subject as distinct from direct object, for example. In some contexts, *subjectivity* contrasts with *objectivity* in suggesting something 'soft', unverifiable, even suspicious. The essays in this book do treat subjectivity, and they are centrally linguistic in their focus, but they do not address *subject* as a grammatical relation. Nor do they address objective versus subjective modes of inquiry – in linguistics or elsewhere. Rather, broadly speaking, the *subjectivity* explored here concerns expression of self and the representation of a speaker's (or, more generally, a locutionary agent's) perspective or point of view in discourse – what has been called a speaker's imprint. In turn, *subjectivisation* (or *subjectification*) refers to the structures and strategies that languages evolve in the linguistic realisation of subjectivity or to the relevant processes of linguistic evolution themselves.

As used here, then, *subjectivity* has an array of meanings, neither so old nor so well studied as grammatical subjecthood, but central to emerging views of discourse – to the intersection of language structure and language use in the expression of self. Subjectivity concerns the involvement of a locutionary agent in a discourse, and the effect of that involvement on the formal shape of discourse – in other words, on the linguistic expression of self. As Julia Kristeva (1989:11) has written about subjectivity and subjectivisation:

Discourse implies first the participation of the subject in his language through his *speech, as an individual*. Using the anonymous structure of *la langue*, the subject forms and transforms himself in the discourse he communicates to the

other. *La langue*, common to all, becomes in discourse the vehicle of a *unique* message. The message belongs to the particular structure of a given subject who imprints a specific seal upon the required structure of *la langue*. Without being aware of it, the subject thus makes his mark on *la langue*.

The discourse sense of *subjectivity* is not now paramount in linguistic analysis, and has never been, in part because structural and formal linguistics more typically focus on language as the expression of *objective* propositions, on occasion displaying a curious indisposition even to recognize the self in discourse. As Lyons (1982:103) has noted, 'Modern Anglo-American linguistics . . . has been dominated by the intellectualist prejudice that language is, essentially, if not solely, an instrument for the expression of propositional thought'.

Still, the subjectivity of discourse – subjectivity in what may be regarded as its more humanistic sense – is not new to linguistics, although at the present time we are witnessing a renaissance of interest in the topic as a critical facet of language: language not strictly as form nor as the expression of propositional thought, language not as autonomous structure nor as representing logical propositions, but language as an expression – an incarnation, even – of perceiving, feeling, *speaking subjects*. Included in a revived humanistic linguistics, as some are calling it (Becker 1988; Tannen 1988; Maynard 1993), is analysis of the expression of self and the representation of point of view and perspective, whether of a speaking subject or a narrated one, in other than propositional form.

It is this humanistic subjectivity that is the focus of the essays in the volume at hand, the proceedings of a conference at St Catharine's College, Cambridge, where a group of researchers interested especially in the grammatical, diachronic, and literary aspects of subjectivity gathered in May 1992. Particularly influential on the approaches taken here are the views of subjectivity adumbrated by John Lyons, who gave the opening remarks at the conference, by Elizabeth Closs Traugott, whose contribution appears in this volume, and by Ronald W. Langacker. The views of Lyons, Traugott, and Langacker are addressed within several of the essays that follow, making superfluous anything more than some prefatory comments here.

Besides the discussion in his influential volumes on semantics (1977), Lyons has written a valuable essay on subjectivity. Its title, 'Deixis and subjectivity: *Loquor, ergo sum?*', is intended to suggest 'a deliberate antithesis to Cartesian and neo-Cartesian intellectualism in linguistics' (1982:105). In the essay, Lyons characterises subjectivity as 'the way in which natural languages, in their structure and their normal manner of operation, provide for the locutionary agent's expression of himself and

of his attitudes and beliefs' (102), and he underscores the fact that a speaker's expression of self in an utterance cannot be reduced 'to the assertion of a set of propositions' (104). Using Lyons' characterisation of subjectivity, Elizabeth Traugott (1989) has taken a diachronic perspective, coupling subjectivity and grammaticalisation, and her views are refined in her contribution to this volume (to which I return in the discussion of individual contributions below). Langacker's analysis of subjectivity, discussed briefly a little later and extensively in the contributions by Carey and Kemmer, needs little elaboration here. He takes a synchronic approach within the framework of cognitive grammar, equating meaning with conceptualisation (1985:109).

Within the essays that follow, contributors unpack a score of subjective expression types, in English and several other languages. As the essays demonstrate, the representation and expression of subjectivity is variegated. To mark subjectivity, some languages exploit morphology, which is perhaps the marking most readily tracked; other languages mark subjectivity in a variety of more subtle ways, ranging from intonation to word order. The prevalence in Japanese of explicit morphological markers probably accounts for an early awareness of subjectivity among scholars of that language. As Maynard (1993:4) describes the situation:

when speaking Japanese, one simply cannot avoid expressing one's personal attitude toward the content of information and toward the addressee. Such a personal voice echoes so prominently in Japanese communication that often . . . rather than information-sharing, it is subtextual emotion-sharing that forms the heart of communication.

In many other languages, including English, subjectivity is marked in ways sufficiently subtle to be easily overlooked, and sufficiently complex to prove challenging to explicate. As Langacker (1990:34) has observed, subjectivity is a notion not only of 'subtlety' but of 'near ineffability'. Exploration of subjectivity in Japanese, a matter of interest among traditional Japanese scholars for two centuries, continued through the 1970s and 1980s among formal and functional grammarians, while in English it remained underexplored.

While not a new notion, then, subjectivity nevertheless remains unfamiliar and is not an ordinary working construct in the linguist's analytic toolbox. Emblematic of its neglect is the fact that subjectivity is not assigned an entry of its own in the *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics* (Bright 1992), though it is discussed under 'literary pragmatics', an arena in which its pedigree in western scholarship is well established. In fact, in western languages, subjectivity has received its

most intense scrutiny in literary expression, where free indirect style is a striking manifestation of narrated subjectivity that has been studied since the turn of the century. Far from being limited to literary contexts, however, subjectivity in English and all other languages is an all-encompassing phenomenon, as in Japanese. Indeed, as Benveniste (1971:226) has observed, 'A language without the expression of person cannot be imagined'.

If it seems obvious that speakers and other locutionary agents must take a perspective on anything they express, and inevitable that the perspective will shape expression, it is not obvious just how perspective influences expression, nor how interpreters construe subjective meanings accurately. Certainly it is not known to what extent cultural (or biological) factors influence subjective expression, nor in what ways the forms of subjective expression may be universal. Moreover, if subjectivity is not well understood in its synchronic operation, it is still less clear how languages evolve mechanisms for the expression of self in non-propositional form, and how such forms come to be grammaticalised.

Three main arenas have been the focus of recent studies of subjectivity and subjectification:

- (1) a locutionary agent's *perspective* as shaping linguistic expression;
- (2) a locutionary agent's expression of *affect* towards the propositions contained in utterances;
- (3) a locutionary agent's expression of the *modality* or epistemic status of the propositions contained in utterances.

As to *perspective*, Langacker (1985, 1990, 1993a, 1993b) has written extensively about its role in the structures of both grammar and semantics. In a series of thought-provoking discussions, he has peeled back the subjective layers in which the most ordinary expressions are enmeshed, including those that have been subjectivised in their evolution from lexical to grammatical elements, such as with the future sense of *go* (*I'm going to study*) and the perfect sense of *have* (*He has finished*). He has also considered the subjective and objective construal of participants, labelling as more objective any expression that represents the observing speaker, as in *Vanessa was sitting across the table from me* (with overt reference to the ground *from me*) and as more subjective any expression like *Vanessa was sitting across the table*, where the ground remains implicit (Langacker 1990). Another example underscores the role of perspective, where 'spatial motion on the part of an objectively construed participant is replaced by subjective motion (mental scanning) on

the part of the conceptualizer', as in the contrast between *The hiker ran up the hill* and *The highway runs from the valley floor to the mountain ridge*. Langacker (1990:19) points out that, as in the sentence about the highway, numerous verbs have undergone a process of subjectification, such that the only movement represented in the verb is the subjective path traced mentally by the conceptualiser.

As to *affect*, 'language has a heart' is the memorable aphorism by which Ochs and Schieffelin (1989) capture the fact that language users can and typically do express affect toward their articulated propositions. This heartiness in language is not a new observation, and the distinction between the emotive functions of language and its referential and conative functions has been highlighted by Bühler (1934), Jakobson (1960), Halliday (1975), Lyons (1977), and others. Synthesising these earlier views, Ochs and Schieffelin (1989:9) observe that:

languages are responsive to the fundamental need of speakers to convey and assess feelings, moods, dispositions and attitudes. This need is as critical and as human as that of describing events. Interlocutors need to know not only what predication a speaker is making [but also] the affective orientation the speaker is presenting with regard to that particular predication.

As with other aspects of subjectivity, affect finds expression in lexicon and various levels of grammar (as well as in gesture and paralinguistic phenomena, of course); discussion of many of these can be found in Ochs and Shieffelin (1989) and Besnier (1990).

As to *modality*, it is perhaps the most thoroughly explored aspect of subjectivity, especially as expressed in verbs and, more recently, adverbs. Taking a simple adverbial example, consider the utterances below:

- (a) It's obvious to me that at sea level water boils at 100 degrees centigrade.
- (b) Obviously, at sea level water boils at 100 degrees centigrade.

Utterance (a) expresses two propositions: (1) something is obvious to the speaker; and (2) what is obvious is that at sea level water boils at 100 degrees centigrade. Utterance (b) makes no reference to a speaker, but expresses the same proposition about the temperature at which water boils. In addition, though, in utterance (b) the modal adverb *obviously* expresses the speaker's judgement as to the epistemic status of the proposition. Thus, one function of adverbs is to represent speaker point of view as to the epistemic status of an expressed proposition (see Biber and Finegan 1988, 1989). Besides such modal adverbs, languages have many devices for expressing the epistemic status of a proposition. The

importance of this fact in the exploration of subjectivity can be inferred from an observation by Lyons (1982:113) that 'the balance of evidence would seem to be in favour of the thesis that, whereas subjective modality . . . is universal in natural languages, objective modality is not'.

Following a period in which the humanistic and cognitive faces of linguistics remained largely in the wings, current interest has now drawn subjectivity into the limelight. There is intense investigation of the role of subjectivity in human interaction, and an emerging view of discourse as an instrument not solely, perhaps not centrally, designed for communicating ready-made content, but as an *expression* of self and, in part, its *creation*. Emphasising the dichotomy between form and meaning during the early part of this century, Leonard Bloomfield attempted to exclude meaning from linguistics. As the century comes to a close, linguists of diverse interests and a wide range of methodologies view meaning as pivotal in the analysis of language, and subjectivity plays an important role in their analyses of how meaning is created and construed.

For example, conversation analysts have investigated subjectivity in several arenas, among them scientific discourse. In analysing the way physicists at an American university frame their discourse in workaday interactions with one another, Ochs et al. (in press) explore ways in which referential practices organise 'subjective involvement' in the worlds of the laboratory. Using the first-person pronoun *I* to refer simultaneously to themselves and to the physical entities discussed in the laboratory meetings, the physicists produced syntactically cohesive but semantically disjunctive expressions such as *I am in the domain state*. According to the researchers, such expressions serve to 'draw the attention of interlocutors to events taking place simultaneously in more than one world and to different identities within each of these worlds'.

In the last decade or so, the expression of subjectivity in literary discourse has been addressed anew by scholars well versed in linguistic analysis. Banfield (1982) and Ehrlich (1990) have helped bring subjectivity, especially as manifested in represented speech and thought, to the attention of linguists. In the literary representation of free indirect style, subjectivity is more patent than in other styles because 'two different subjects of consciousness, the speaker and some other person' need to be invoked (Lyons 1982:120). According to Brinton (this volume), free indirect style 'enables an author to overcome the limitations of one narrator and hence one point of view per text by portraying different characters' subjective impressions from their point of view, at the same time maintaining the third person and past tense of narration'. The

importance of subjectivity in literary works is well represented in the present volume.

In other arenas, too, linguists have been exploring subjectivity. In a valuable paper treating 'lexicalization patterns', Talmy (1985) examines the expression of several categories bearing subjective meaning, among them valence/voice, attitude, mood, path, hedging, factivity/evidence, and figure and ground (see also Talmy 1978). Elsewhere, Kuroda (1972, 1973) describes the correlation between stories in Japanese and certain grammatical features, finding in the use of the reflexive *zibun* and of certain sensation words that Japanese style (that is, its grammar) reflects the epistemological, as well as literary, differences between reportive and non-reportive stories. Kuno (1987, Kuno and Kaburaki 1977), too, has examined subjectivity in Japanese, as have Nakayama (1991), Yoshida (1991), and, in book-length studies, Maynard (1993) and Iwasaki (1993). Following two centuries of explorations in the Japanese *kokugogaku* tradition (see Maynard 1993), researchers are now exploring subjectivity in other Asian languages, including Mandarin (Zubin et al. 1990) and Korean (Chun and Zubin 1990; Zubin et al. 1990), as well as other non-western languages: Samoan (Ochs 1986), Nukulaelae Tuvaluan (Besnier 1989), Zinacanteco Tzotzil (Haviland 1989), and more (see Chafe and Nichols 1986). The present volume adds to the understanding of subjectivity in languages such as English, German, Icelandic, and Dutch.

The first contribution following this introduction is Rudi Keller's closely argued discussion of 'The epistemic *weil*'. Keller demonstrates that the use of main-clause word order in German *weil* clauses is a grammaticalised reflection of a change of meaning. The epistemic *weil*, but not the factual *weil*, is marked by the occurrence of the verb in second, rather than clause-final, position. Keller argues that the utilisation of this position for an epistemic function is 'caused by the semantic change from factual to epistemic *weil*'. Thus, in the examples below, (b) is not, as some would claim, a simpler and more colloquial version of (a), but an utterance with a different meaning, as marked by the position of the verb.

(a) Er ist nach Hause gegangen, weil er Kopfweh
 he has home gone because he headache
 hatte. (factual)
 had

(b) Er ist nach Hause gegangen, weil er hatte Kopfweh. (epistemic)

By reporting a state of affairs, sentence (a), with its factual *weil*, addresses the question, 'Why is that the case?'; by contrast, the epistemic sentence

(b) offers an argument and thereby addresses the question, 'On what basis do you know?' Within their respective *weil* clauses the speaker of the factual sentence talks about a headache, the speaker of the epistemic sentence about knowledge of the headache. According to Keller, the epistemic reading 'demands' certain relationships between what is presupposed and what is stated and, consequently, a paratactic rather than a hypotactic word order. Keller views the epistemic *weil* as 'a metaphorical application of the factual *weil*' that is about to lexicalise, and he shows how the semantification or pragmatic strengthening of a metaphor often involves subjectification. Taking issue with an analysis of metaphorisation as having to do with human cognition, Keller attributes it instead to the very technique of using signs to invite inferences by 'associative concluding'. When an associative conclusion is recurrent enough, 'regularity will be interpreted as a rule', and what formerly had to be derived by pragmatic inference becomes lexicalised in the metaphor. On the basis of five identified advantages, Keller predicts a change to epistemic *weil*, accompanied by the word order change.

In 'Subjectification in grammaticalisation', Elizabeth Traugott also discusses diachronic patterns. She extends her previous analyses, concentrating on the intersection between grammaticalisation and subjectification. Regarding subjectification as a pragmatic-semantic process whereby meanings become increasingly based in speakers' beliefs about, or attitudes towards, what they are discussing, she illustrates how certain expressions that initially articulate concrete, lexical, and objective meanings have come – through repeated use in local syntactic contexts – to serve abstract, pragmatic, interpersonal, speaker-based functions. Grammaticalisation, by contrast, is the process whereby lexical items or phrases come to be 'reanalyzed as having syntactic and morphological functions'. For example, the grammaticalisation of *be going to* relies on pragmatic reanalysis that entails the experienter of an abstract sense of motion being identified with the speaking subject, thus realigning and strengthening speaker perspective. In her contribution, Traugott treats a range of features: the modals *must* and *will*, temporal and concessive *while*, the scalar particle *even*, stance adverbs such as *actually* and *generally*, the Black English Vernacular feature *come V-ing*, and the discourse particles *I think* and *let alone*. She identifies five dimensions along which subjectification develops, including propositional and discourse function, objective and subjective meaning, and non-epistemic and epistemic modality. Modifying an earlier claim (Traugott 1989) concerning unidirectionality from propositional to textual to expressive meanings, she proposes a more general principle

whereby propositional material evolves in discourse situations to meet the purposes of 'creating text and indicating attitudes'. These processes of subjectification follow from a cognitive need for speakers to increase the informativeness of what they say, and a social need 'to be polite and offer options for interpretation, and for hearers to interpret more than they hear'.

In a chapter touching on literary language, but much broader in its application, Suzanne Kemmer unravels several strands of the complex meanings and pragmatic functions of English *-self*, describing its principal conventionalised senses and exploring how several related uses underlie a formal similarity. Like several other contributors, she invokes both Langacker's and Traugott's senses of 'subjectivity' in her analysis. With reflexive *-self*, a same-clause co-referential noun phrase is expressed, as in *Stan admired himself*. Emphatic *-self* serves to mark an unexpected referent, as in *Even the emperor himself couldn't accomplish that*. Most closely related to subjectivity is the viewpoint *-self*, as in *Picture the boyish version of himself that Richard Selzer offers up in his memoir*. Here, the antecedent of the reflexive is embedded in the relative clause that follows it. With some instances of the viewpoint *-self*, an embedded clause represents thoughts or words of an antecedent from the antecedent's perspective, as in *John told Mary that there was a picture of himself in the paper*. In such a logophoric use, a 'direct discourse perspective' prevails, and the antecedent must be a 'subject of consciousness'. Kemmer concludes that the viewpoint *-self* 'subtly instructs the hearer what point of view to take; the effect conveyed is a sense of the speaker's empathy with the character, the feeling of being in the character's shoes or seeing from the character's eyes'.

In 'Subjectification and the development of the English perfect', Kathleen Carey thoughtfully compares Traugott's and Langacker's conceptions of subjectivity and identifies points of convergence and divergence by applying their underlying assumptions to stages in the grammaticalisation of the English perfect. Drawing on literary data from earlier periods of the language, Carey examines the path of grammaticalisation represented by the paradigm Resultative → Perfect → 'Hot News' perfect. She shows how the shift from Resultative → Perfect would constitute subjectification both for Traugott and Langacker. She finds that their perspectives converge in their conception of the process underlying subjectification, arguing specifically that 'conversational implicature plays a crucial role in instigating semantic change'. She concludes this from the fact that, for Traugott, 'meanings become more speaker-based because, in their drive toward expressivity,

speakers will conversationally implicate meanings that are not linguistically encoded'. And, for Langacker, she finds that subjectification involves the shift of the locus of relevance away from the linguistically coded, objectively construed subject, to the speech situation which is not itself linguistically coded, and which is then the site of implicature. Carey concludes that the two complementary models highlight different facets of the same process.

In 'Subjectification, syntax, and communication', Arie Verhagen demonstrates the value of integrating syntactic, semantic, and discourse perspectives in linguistic analysis. He examines the objective and subjective meanings of the Dutch verbs *beloven* 'promise', *dreigen* 'threaten', and *weigeren* 'refuse'. In their subjective senses, these verbs are juxtaposed with the verb in the complement clause, thus forming a cluster of the subjective verb and the non-finite verb, as in (a) below. In contrast, an objective meaning is realised by a word order with an intervening noun phrase object, as in (b). Thus, the subjective reading of (a) contrasts with the objective reading of (b):

- (a) omdat het debat spannend beloofde to worden (subjective)
because the debate exciting promised to become
'because the debate promised to become exciting'
- (b) toen hij beloofde de grondwet te zullen
when he promised the constitution to shall
vergedigen (objective)
defend
'when he promised to defend the constitution'

Teasing apart the syntactic complications involved with each of his verbs, and invoking arguments from semantics and discourse analysis, Verhagen demonstrates the value of combining all three levels in analysing the subtleties of subjectification.

Dieter Stein explores the interplay between the history of word order inversions and their emotive and subjective functions in English, focussing on what twentieth-century linguists view as a natural tendency for what comes first to mind to be first expressed. Inversions are viewed as having emotional and expressive functions, and Stein traces the rise of such functions in English. In his wide-ranging contribution, he discusses an array of subjective expression types, concentrating on left-shifted adverbials, as in *Never did I hear about cabalism*, and on certain presentative structures, as with *In came Chomsky*. As the likely reason for such front-shifted inversions bearing an affective meaning, Stein cites their 'inherent proclivity towards cognitive saliency'. Illus-

trating how, from time to time, particular inversion structures have come and (it would seem) gone, he documents that certain options re-emerged, now functioning to express emotion and affect. Like Adamson (this volume), Stein relates his findings in part to intellectual and cultural developments in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England.

While most contributions to this volume explore subjectivity in non-literary language, three focus principally on its literary expression. In the first of these, Susan Wright examines the historical development of subjectivity, describing how the progressive contributes to the marking of 'experiential syntax'. She focusses on the 'changing consciousness' about the expression of subjectivity in an effort to uncover when and how 'an interpretation of (self-conscious) subjectivity' becomes attached to 'a bundle of features that may appear irregularly, inconsistently, even . . . randomly'. Noting that 'powerful and active . . . resources for the expression of subjectivity in natural discourse [may exist] long before particular ones are selected as features with a *potential* for subjective expression in literary discourse', she subtly explores the relationship between the literary use of the progressive to foreground characters' subjectivities and its earlier use in everyday conversation. As with other features conventionalised in a specific function or sense, Wright surmises that subjective uses of the progressive were being pragmatically inferred from non-aspectual progressives as early as the seventeenth century, as in this example from a letter by Dorothy Osborne: 'I am combing and curling and kissing this Lock all day, and dreaming ont all night.' A thorough examination of sixteen prose comedies by Wycherley, Congreve, Centlivre, and especially Behn leads Wright to conclude that there is indeed a lag between the pragmatically inferred subjectivity of the conversational progressive and 'its systematic construction as literary style'.

In another contribution examining subjectivity in literary texts, Laurel Brinton analyses the strategic deployment of English reflexive pronouns lacking an overt antecedent (a feature also examined in Kemmer's contribution). Such reflexives generally lack an antecedent within their own clause and sometimes within their own sentence, though not within the context of their discourse. Brinton demonstrates how such reflexives represent the consciousness of *narrated* characters from their own point of view, as in this instance from James' *The Ambassadors*: 'It was indeed as if they were gathered for a performance, the performance of "Europe" by his confederate and *himself*.' In free indirect discourse, Brinton finds non-anaphoric reflexive pronouns neither grammatically aberrant nor stylistically idiosyncratic, but,

rather, occurring optionally in the same environments that support simple pronouns. Neither locally bound nor always c-commanded by their antecedents, they are nevertheless 'somewhat constrained syntactically'. The antecedents of such reflexives are not new or unknown, and can be identified in the immediate discourse context. Brinton compares the non-anaphoric reflexives of English with those found in a number of European languages, particularly Icelandic, and with the logophoric pronouns characteristic of some West African languages. Relating her analysis to Kuno's notion of empathy, whereby a speaker identifies with a person or thing that 'participates in the event or state that he describes in a sentence' (Kuno 1987:206), Brinton shows that non-anaphoric reflexives represent a character's point of view, a consciousness, often, that the narrator 'cannot presume to know'. Despite their rarity, Brinton deems non-anaphoric reflexives a 'significant marker' of free indirect style, and her essay offers a comprehensive analysis of them.

Sylvia Adamson closes the volume with an unusual and bold contribution. In it she traces the origins of English empathetic narrative to the culture of Puritanism with its narratives of experiential memory. Examining several Early Modern English works, from Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* and *Pilgrim's Progress* to Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, Adamson quantifies the distribution of past-tense verbs with referentially cotermporal adverbs, distinguishing between 'now' and 'then' variants. In so doing she establishes a link between the rise of empathetic style and a 'narrative genre explicitly devoted to the representation of experiential memory'. She finds in the Puritan narratives that 'the gap between narrating and narrated selves takes on an ideological force: the narrated self is not only past but other'. For writers attempting to narrate this experiential memory, the challenge is 'to recreate the past in all its experiential vividness, the more so since the objective coordinates of time, place and circumstance . . . provide simply the context for the significant events, which are subjective'. Adamson identifies the narrative of consciousness as an essential condition for the rise of empathetic narrative as a stylistic option. In *Grace Abounding* she finds 'stylisation', a discourse equivalent to the process of grammaticalisation. It should not surprise us, Adamson gently coaxes, 'if empathetic narrative made its historical début within this narrative genre as the technical means of realising its aims – to report on consciousness in the mode of experiential memory'. Far from causing surprise, Adamson moulds a plausible link between the historical emergence of empathetic narrative and the rise of the Puritan conversion narratives as a genre. Her analysis leads her to hypothesise a process of

de-subjectivisation, which partly contravenes the accepted path of grammaticalisation discussed elsewhere in the volume.

In the essays that follow, then, the contributors explore diverse facets of subjectivity. Some do so synchronically, others diachronically. Taken together, the contributions treat quite a few features in several languages. Some focus on the language of ordinary life, others on the language of literature. Various, they appeal to syntax, semantics, and discourse for their explanations, and on occasion to cultural phenomena beyond the customary reach of scientific inquiry. Some contributors grapple with competing views of subjectivity, others forge new handles on the topic. In all, the contributions constitute a welcome addition to the body of inquiry into subjectivity, and most readers will discover in these pages much that challenges their previous thinking about the topic.

I headed this introduction with an observation from Benveniste; it is appropriate to conclude with another: 'Language is marked so deeply by the expression of subjectivity that one might ask if it could still function and be called language if it were constructed otherwise' (Benveniste 1971:225). The essays in this volume demonstrate how deeply embedded in linguistic expression subjectivity is, and how central to human discourse. If, as Benveniste suggests, a language without subjectivity cannot be imagined, it follows that a linguistics without subjectivity ought to be an oxymoron. This volume illustrates the pervasive nature of subjectivity in discourse and helps keep the oxymoron at bay.

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