A CASE OF GRAMMATICALIZATION IN MODERN SWEDISH: THE USE OF BA IN ADOLESCENT SPEECH

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The purpose of this paper is to describe the grammaticalization of the Swedish word bara (Eng. just) in present day adolescent speech. Bara (normally pronounced ba) has in the last fifteen years started to be used with two new functions in spoken, narrative discourse: to foreground central events and to introduce quotations. In the paper, it is demonstrated that the foregrounding function can be inferred from the meaning of bara in standard use, and how the quotative function has, subsequently, developed out of the foregrounding function. In both these developments, crucial characteristics of narratives, and the way quotations are used within these, play an important part. It is also shown that the development described constitutes an exception to an important assumption about the direction of grammaticalization, i.e. that the change proceeds from a propositional to a textual to an interpersonal meaning but not in the opposite direction. (Adolescent speech, grammaticalization, spoken narratives, quotation markers, Swedish.)

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to account for the process whereby the word bara (Eng. just, only), in the speech of adolescents in central Sweden, has come to be used to introduce direct quotations, a process that can be described in terms of grammaticalization.

In the speech of this age group, bara, which in the standard language is used mainly to modify certain constituents of the clause, has come to be very frequently used in two new functions which are more associated with the organization of the overall discourse (cf. Nordberg, 1984: 18; Kotsinas, 1990: 83). The following examples show these new functions of bara (realized as ba)¹:

1. Sen kom de så här sjutitusen engelsmän ba.
   Then came there like this seventy thousand Englishmen just.
   Then seventy thousand Englishmen turned up.

2. Anki å Malin ba *öh jävla hippie.*
   Anki and Malin just *oh bloody hippie.*
   Anki and Malin said 'Oh bloody hippie'.

Example (1) shows the function that I (following Hopper, 1979) will refer to as the foregrounding function of ba. Example (2) shows ba with a quotative function. My main concern is to show how these new functions have developed

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and how they are related. According to my hypothesis, there are two stages to this development. In the first, the foregrounding function of ba developed out of a more traditional use of bara, a development that is best described as an instance of grammaticalization. The arguments for this are, first, that it is possible to infer the meaning of ba functioning as a foregrounding marker from the meaning of bara used in a more traditional way, and second, that this process seems to satisfy several commonly used criteria for identifying a grammaticalization process.

The quotative function has later, in a second step, developed out of the foregrounding function. I will try to motivate this analysis by demonstrating the characteristics of ba used as a quotative marker, how this use is related to the foregrounding function and how it has changed over time.

My material consists of orally presented stories, and it seems that the overall conditions connected with the story as a speech event and the role of quotations within these are important factors in the development described.

Background and material

Grammaticalization

The term grammaticalization was, according to Traugott and Heine (1991), originally used for the kind of language change phenomena whereby a lexical item developed into a grammatical one. More recent researchers have used the term to refer also to processes that make already grammatical morphemes receive other or more grammatical functions (Lehmann, 1985: 303; Heine and Reh, 1984: 15).

A strict delimitation of the term is problematic, since it is hard even to decide what is and is not part of the grammar of a language. According to Hopper (1991: 19f), it would be quite unsatisfactory to delimit the grammar to those categories that have been morphologized—even though these should certainly be treated as the core of the grammar—since what is realized as an affix in one language can be realized in looser collocations in others. One problematic borderline case is discussed by Thompson and Mulac (1991). They suggest that I think in vernacular English in final position or initial position, when that is deleted, has received grammatical status as an evidential.

Different kinds of criteria tend to be used to identify a grammaticalization process (Heine and Reh, 1984; Lehmann, 1985). It is, however, not completely unproblematic to apply these in a particular case. Many of the criteria are best suited to identify a process that is already completed, and do not apply to ongoing processes, where the changes still have not come to an end. Moreover, grammaticalization is a very complex process with different phases: lexical elements develop into free grammatical morphemes, which are receiving new and more grammatical functions and may eventually end up as suffixes tied to lexi-
cal elements. Most criteria, however, have relevance only to certain parts of this process (Hopper, 1991: 21).

It is a general assumption that grammaticalization is a unidirectional process. Lexical items lose meaning and come to serve as grammatical morphemes, while the opposite does not happen (Traugott and Heine, 1991: 4f; though cf. Heine and Reh, 1984: 74f and Herring, 1991). How this process is best described is the subject of much discussion. One characteristic of items undergoing grammaticalization is that they seem to receive a more abstract meaning. According to Traugott (1982; Traugott, 1986; Traugott, 1989), grammaticalization, especially in the early stages, also implies an increase in pragmatic meaning, that is: the meaning tends to be more subjective. This seems to be true to a very high degree for the development of bara. In part 6, I will treat Traugott’s model in more detail.

The adverb bara: current use and historical development

The closest English synonyms to bara are just and only. As in the case of its English equivalents, bara is used to focus on one element in the clause, for example fem år (five years old) and stod där (stood there) in the following: Han är bara fem år (He is only five years old); Han bara stod där (He just stood there).

Thorell (1973) counts bara among the focus adverbials (särskilda satsadverbial). These are to be distinguished from the sentence adverbials which modify the whole sentence, since they ‘bring out a certain element by specifying its significance for the utterance’ (p. 167). It is, however, often very hard to strictly separate adverbials that modify certain elements from those that modify the whole sentence, and this is particularly true for those modifying the verb (Jacobson, 1964: 32). A classification similar to the one made by Thorell is made by Telemen (1974: 90) who also stresses the ability of bara to express the speaker’s attitude.

The meaning of bara is also discussed by Sigurd (1986). He uses the term ‘adverbs of expectation’ for bara and other similar elements, since they express the expectations of the speaker, that is, in the case of bara, that the focus is something other than the speaker expected. What is expected in a specific case must often be derived from the context.

In sentences like Sven har bara två barn (Sven has only two children) and Sven har bara pojkar (Sven has only boys), bara denotes that the focus is less (quantitative use) or worse (qualitative use) than expected or normal. Bara often but not always denotes that the focus is worse or less than expected. In the example Sven spelar bara Bach (Sven plays only Bach), bara does not express the speaker’s opinion that Bach is a bad composer. In this ‘exclusive’ use, then, the semantic feature ‘other than expected’ is almost completely lack-
ing. One can suspect that the meaning of ‘restriction’ (being in accordance with *bara*'s historical origin: see below) is the most basic one for *bara* and that the semantic feature ‘other (less/worse) than expected’ has arisen as a conventional implicature (cf. Levinson, 1983).

Elsie Wijk-Andersson (1991), whose study I will soon discuss in more detail, has pointed out that the element that *bara* modifies is often the focus of the sentence, which ‘represents new information and is the most important part of the rheme of the sentence’ (p. 120). According to Wijk-Andersson, *bara* has a very free distribution in modern Swedish; it can be placed in eight different positions in the sentence. The only position not available is as sole element in sentence initial constituent position. The most common position for *bara* is after the finite verb, the position normally occupied by *inte* ‘not’ and other sentence adverbials. *Bara* is found in this position in almost 70% of all sentences. When the focus of *bara* is the verb phrase, this figure is even higher, 77.4%, while *bara* occurs in the position before the finite verb, which is the most common for the foregrounding *ba*, in only 16.3% of the sentences.

As will be seen in the following, these syntactic and semantic functions of *bara*, to focus an important element in the sentence and to express the speaker’s expectations and attitude, along with its free distribution and ability to focus different elements in the clause, all seem to have played a role in the development of the new functions of *ba*. Another important factor seems to be the vagueness about what is the focus of *bara*; whether it is a certain constituent or the whole clause is, as mentioned, often very unclear.

Elsie Wijk-Andersson’s (1991) dissertation ‘*Bara i fokus*’ (*Bara* in focus) contains a thorough investigation of the historical development of *bara* in the written language. The study concerns *bara* and its equivalents *blott*, *enbart*, *endast*, *uteslutande*, *allen* and *allenast*², and treats their history from the sixteenth century until today.

*Bara* originates from the plural and definite forms of the adjective *bar*, ‘uncovered, eg. naked,’ which have an -*a* as inflectional suffix. During the sixteenth century, however, *bara* was used in contexts where it could be interpreted either as an adjective or as an adverb (p. 51f). These ambiguous contexts (and also *bara* used metaphorically) gave rise to a reinterpretation of *bara*. Sentences such as *där han med bara händer hade överrumplat delegaten* (where he with bare/only hands had attacked the delegate) have, according to Wijk-Andersson, constituted the basis for ‘giving new content to and spreading new uses of *bara*’ (p. 110). Wijk-Andersson also refers to SAOB (Dictionary of the Swedish language), which claims that *allen* and other adverbs ending in -*a* could have functioned as a model (p. 51f).

The development of *bara* also implies an increase in its distributional possibilities. During the Old Swedish period, when *bara* was used exclusively as an
adjective, the only possible position was within a nominal phrase, and this is true also for the sixteenth century (though in some cases, such as the one above, one can interpret bara as modifying the whole nominal phrase). During the seventeenth century, bara seems to be established as an adverb; unambiguous adverbial uses now exist. During this period it was also possible for bara to be positioned before the verb in the sentence and during the eighteenth century other possibilities were added: bara occurred detached from its focus, often postverbally, in the position that is generally occupied by the sentence adverbial, and it also began to be used as a subordinator.

The author also briefly comments upon the variant ba in adolescents’ speech, the subject of this study. Ba is shown as a part of a morphological continuum for bara (p. 187), shown in figure 1. It illustrates the weakening of bara’s meaning and the author also claims that ‘the transition to functional particle is accompanied by loss of stress and morphological reduction’. The core meaning of bara is described as ‘focused restriction/depreciation’, with ‘objectively presented restriction/depreciation’ on the strong side, and ‘subjectively presented restriction/depreciation’ on the weak side.

The changes going on in present day speech seem to form a natural continuation of the changes that can be observed in written material from the Old Swedish period and up until today. As Wijk-Andersson demonstrates, the meaning of bara has been weakened and it has become more subjective throughout its development up to its present use in the speech of adolescents.

Material

This study is based on spoken material, recorded on three different occasions. Two recordings of conversations with four speakers, aged 11-13, in each, were taken from those made in the town of Eskilstuna, located in central Sweden some 110 kilometers west of Stockholm, in 1977 and 1979 respectively (Aniansson, 1979). One conversation between three 11-year-old girls was recorded in the city of Uppsala, located slightly less than 70 kilometers north of Stockholm, in 1984 (Nordberg, 1984). The third corpus is taken from recordings made in a summer camp for children from Stockholm in 1989-1990, with children 10-14 years old. The conversations are all very lively and the subjects do not seem to take much notice of the fact that they are being recorded.
The last two groups are the main objects of study, while the first one is used primarily for comparisons over time. Most of the quoted examples are, therefore, from the last two corpora. Since there do not seem to be any substantial differences in the way ba is used between the corpora from Uppsala and Stockholm, these are treated together under the heading U(ppsala) + S(stockholm), while the material from Eskilstuna is referred to as the E(esklstuna)-corpus.

The Eskilstuna corpus is recorded 5–7 years earlier than the corpus from Uppsala and 10–12 years earlier than the corpus from Stockholm. One can assume that Stockholm, being the largest city in the region and also the capital of Sweden, is an important centre of diffusion for linguistic innovations (Nordberg, 1985: 32f). Since Eskilstuna, but not Uppsala, is located outside the area that is directly influenced by Stockholm, there are good reasons to assume that the use of ba found in the Eskilstuna corpus represents an earlier stage of development than that attested to in the other corpora.

Stories

I collected the instances of ba that are the object of this study from those parts of the recorded conversations that consist of stories. There are several reasons for this. By delimiting the investigation to one type of text or speech event, it is easier to find those factors that seem to be a part of the process, though this inevitably means that the possibility of generalizing the results may be restricted.

Ba seems to occur mainly in those parts of the conversations that are occupied by storytelling. The quotative function has a natural connection to stories and although reported speech probably occurs outside stories, one can take for granted that the bulk of speech reports occur within stories. Moreover, the foregrounding function occurs in narrative clauses, the clause type that forms the backbone of a story (see below).

From the U+S-corpus I have extracted sixty stories by ten speakers and from the E-corpus thirty-five stories by eight different speakers.

To define a story (or narrative) I have used the concept of temporal juncture (Labov and Waletzky, 1967: 25f), which provides a necessary condition for a story. A temporal juncture is found between two clauses if their order can not be changed without also changing the semantic interpretation of the inferred order of occurrence of the events described. A minimal story, then, consists of at least two narrative clauses, which should also describe events that precede the time of speaking. Normally a story also contains some sentences that give information about where and when the events took place and about participants and objects. Those clauses often occur in an orienting section in the beginning of the story but can also be found in other places throughout the story (Labov, 1972: 364f).
A story must have a point. This means that it must contain events that are in some way unusual or unexpected—a sequence of events where everything that happens is what normally happens can not be stated in the form of a story (Beaugrande, 1982: 408; Polanyi, 1979)—and it must also have some connection with the context in which it occurs. The point of the story may not be directly inferable from an account of the events that occurred. Therefore a story normally contains devices, whose function is to make the listener understand the point. These devices express the speaker’s evaluation of the story, which is defined by Labov and Waletzky, as ‘that part of the narrative which reveals the attitude of the narrator towards the narrative by emphasizing the relative importance of some narrative units as compared to others’ (Labov and Waletzky, 1967: 37).

The evaluation can take the form of direct statements, in which the narrator expresses his or her opinion about the events in the story. Instead of doing this directly to the listener, outside the story frame, the narrator can let the opinions be expressed by the characters in the story, either through quotations of something they said or thought or by reporting something they did at that time. And he or she can also employ lexical or syntactic means for evaluation (Labov, 1972: 366f). As I will show, the need for evaluation, that is, the speaker’s need to differentiate between the events that constitute the story, seems to be important in an account of the role ba has come to play in the stories told by Swedish adolescents.

Some of the devices that Labov describes as evaluating are also part of what are called ‘performed narratives’ (Wolfson, 1982: 24). A performed narrative tends to have a high proportion of features such as repetitions, direct reports of speech and thought, deletions and onomatopoeic expressions (Wolfson, 1982; Tannen, 1986: 324). The stories in my material all have a high proportion of these features.

When collecting instances of ba from the E-corpus I have extended the concept of story slightly by also considering sequences where the speakers collectively indulge in fancies. This is thus not a description of something that actually happened or that somebody did but something that it was jokingly supposed could happen or could be done.

**Ba as a foregrounding marker**

The relatively high frequency of ba in stories seems to be connected to the fact that it occurs almost exclusively in sentences that describe actions or events. Example (3) shows a typical use of ba as a foregrounding marker:

(3) Han hade sagt till e- till nån snubbe i klassen så här *ah du tror inte ja vågar skära dig i armen* (.) hade han sagt nej hade han ba dragit upp kniven å gjort de liksom helt sjuk.
He had said to a- to some guy in the class like this *ah you think not I dare to cut you in the arm* (.) had he said no had he just taken out the knife and done it like (.) completely sick.

*He said to a guy in his class ‘You don’t think I dare to cut you in the arm’. When the guy said ‘no’ he took out the knife and cut him.*

In this short story one finds *ba* in the sentence that describes the most central event in the narrative. This event is the one that ‘makes the story’. It is unexpected and abnormal and is not causally predictable from the other events. The unexpectedness and abnormality is also expressed by the narrator in an additional way, by the phrase *helt sjuk* (*completely sick*). In Labov’s terminology one could describe both *ba* and *helt sjuk* as evaluative elements. *Helt sjuk* is an example of external evaluation, i.e. the narrator turns directly to the listener and expresses his opinion about the event, while *ba* is an example of how the narrator can employ departure from basic narrative syntax to express evaluation. To be precise, *ba* belongs to the category that Labov calls ‘intensifiers’, which ‘selects one of these events and strengthens or intensifies it’ (Labov, 1972: 378). *All in I knocked him all out in the street* is, according to Labov, an example of an expression that functions as an intensifier.

In the following extract, there are five examples of *ba* used as a foregrounding marker:

(4) 1. Nej (.) han fråga de (.) ha- min kompis fråga de 2. på en engelsk tjej så här (.) när hans kill- 3. hennes kille var där (1.8) så *ba* (.) tog han upp 4. handen så här â så *ba* ((sniffar)) *it smells* sa 5. han så här (.) sen kom de så här sjuttitusen 6. engelsmän *ba* (0.5) kom en liten jävel fram till 7. mej så här (.) å en stor brevi så här så ja kunde 8. inte göra nånting (0.4) han *ba* slog mej tre gånger 9. på ögat så här samma ställe liksom (.) sen *ba* slog 10. han lite vilt (0.3) fick ja värsta ögat.
1. No (.) he asked that (.) he- my friend asked that 2. to an English girl like this (.) when his boyf- her 3. boyfriend was there (1.8) so *just* (.) took he up 4. the hand like this and then *just* ((sniffing)) *it smells* 5. said he like this (.) then came there like this seventy 6. thousand Englishmen *just* (0.5) came a little devil up to 7. me like this (.) and a big beside like this so I
8. could not do anything (0.4) he just hit me three times
9. in the eye like this same place like (.) then just hit he
10. a bit wildly (0.3) got I the worst eye.

My friend asked an English girl, who was with her boyfriend [if he could give her a kiss on her hand]. He took her hand and smelled it. 'It smells,' he said. And then seventy thousand Englishmen turned up. A small guy came up to me, and he had another bigger guy with him so I couldn’t do anything. He hit me three times in the eye, in the same place. And then he went on hitting everywhere. I got a terrible black eye.

The occurrences of *ba* on lines 3, 8 and 9 are very much of the same kind as the one in example (3). Their positions in the sentence are the same and the events that these sentences relate are, as for the other two instances of *ba*, events that are in some way remarkable. *Ba* on line 4 is somewhat different in that it modifies an event that is dramatized by the narrator, i.e. instead of using a linguistic expression he makes a sound which conveys that he was smelling the girl’s hand. The *ba* on line 6 has a final position in the sentence, a position which, as I will show, is rather unusual in the later U+S-corpus, but predominant in the earlier E-corpus.

Example (5) is taken from the E-corpus. Also in this case, *ba* is placed in a sentence which relates an event that is abnormal and unexpected and also central in the overall course of events:

(5) Så tog han saxen (.) eller va de en kniv (.) så stod han så här å hacka på handen *ba* s:å packa han in de i ett paket å slängde de i vattnet.

So took he the scissors (.) or was it a knife (.) so stood he like this chopping the hand just then packed he in it in a packet and threw it in the water.

*He took the scissors or maybe it was a knife and started chopping the hand. Then he wrapped it up in a packet and threw it into the water.*

*Ba* occurs, with few exceptions, only in these two positions, before the verb and in the sentence’s final position, positions where one is very likely to interpret *ba* as modifying the whole sentence. *Ba* does not, however, occur in the position after the finite verb, which is the most common position for *bara* in written language. This position is, on the whole, much less frequently represented in the material than the preverbal and sentence final positions and when it occurs, *ba* has a more traditional function.

The function of *ba* in examples (3)–(5) deviates clearly from the function of the more traditional *bara*. According to Wijk-Andersson (above), the core meaning of *bara* seems to vary between an ‘objectively’ and ‘subjectively presented restriction/deprecation.’ This includes *bara* in sentences like, *Sven har bara två barn* (Sven has only two children), *Sven bara stod där* (Sven just stood there) and *Sven spelar bara Bach* (Sven plays only Bach).
In the sentences from example (4), *Sen kom de så här sjuttitisen engelsmän ba* (then there came like this seventy thousand englishmen just) and *han ba slog mej tre gånger på örat* (he just hit me three times in the eye), the meaning is different. It is not possible to replace ba with a traditional bara without a change of meaning, which seems to be due to the fact that the events expressed are not consistent with the sense of depreciation that is so prominent in the two examples first mentioned.

The component of expectation (and attitude) suggested by Sigurd still appears to be present, and now to be predominant, but without the implied ‘less or worse than.’ The stress is now on ‘other than expected (normal, usual)’. The sense of restriction, which is so prominent in the third example, does not seem to be present either.

There are, however, uses of bara in the language of adults that closely resembles the foregrounding function of ba, as in the following story taken from a newspaper interview: *Hole-in-one, jag blev aldeles paff, jag bara skrek* (Hole-in-one, I was completely taken aback, I just screamed) (*Aftonbladet* 92/09/14).

An important question is how the function of ba in examples (3)–(5) should be appropriately described. The description of ba as an ‘evaluative element’ seems to be rather vague, and is meaningful only within the theoretical frame put forward by Labov. Moreover, by just saying this, one has not decided what status should be ascribed to ba: is it a casual use of a lexically suitable expression or a conventionalized use with grammatical or near grammatical status? The high frequency of ba in my material seems to favour the second alternative. If so, this would be a case of introduction of a (free) morphological marker for a grammatical function or discourse function that has not previously had any overt expression in Swedish.

This function could be the same as the one described by Hopper (1979: 37): ‘A number of languages possess morpho-syntactic devices which indicate that the event or action signalled by a particular sentence is of especial relevance to the discourse of which the sentence is a part, as opposed to other sentences, which not being so marked, are signalled as being incidental, descriptive, or supportive of the main events of the narrative or discourse’. In literary French, this foregrounding function is carried by the tense form passé historique, which, opposed to imparfait, marks ‘the new, dynamic events, the actions which carry the narrative forward’ (Hopper, 1979: 38). The sentences with verbs in passé historique tend, according to Hopper, to be chronically sequenced, i.e. the events described do not overlap in time with one another, the verbs tend to be lexically punctual and the sentences normally show a much more even distribution of old and new information than the imparfait sentences. At least the first two, and probably also the third, of these characteristics seem to be true also for the sentences and verbs that are modified by ba.
The use of passé historique in French and the use of ba in Swedish differ in that the latter does not seem to be as consistently used as the former. The use of ba is more similar to the use of the suffix -lah in Malay, which is also described by Hopper. Lah, like ba (and passé historique), is used in narrative sequences to foreground central events. Compared to passé historique -lah is more sparsely used: ‘Malay usage, by contrast seems to be [to] take clusters of events and mark the central event in each cluster with -lah’ (p. 46). The parallel between Swedish and Malay is reinforced by the fact that -lah, in addition to the discourse function, is used to focus on one element in a clause, as in the following example (p. 46):

(6) Anjing-lah yang hilang, bukan kuching.
    dog which lost, not cat

‘It was a dog I lost, not a cat’

As I have claimed above, bara’s ability to focus on one word or phrase constitutes a prerequisite for its development into discourse marker. This connection is also dwelt upon by Hopper: ‘-Lah is a focusing particle, whose function is to indicate that the word to which it is a part, as well as any dependant clauses, are a central part of the narrative and are foregrounded. These two functions—foregrounding and focusing—are not separable, but are aspects of one and the same principle’ (p. 47).

Hopper (1979: 48) further claims that -lah, has come to be interpreted as a marker of perfective aspect or past tense. Though this is not within the scope of this study, I want to point out the possibility of a similar development in Swedish.

In short, what I want to suggest is that the development leading to the function of ba as a foregrounding marker could be described in the following way. A speaker who wants maximal expressiveness by foregrounding a certain event in the story, casually uses ba, since it is a suitable element for this purpose, syntactically through the unrestricted distribution that allows positions where ba comes to modify the whole sentence, and semantically through the subjective meaning component ‘unexpectedness’ which in some contexts is very conspicuous. This occasional use is then conventionalized (cf. Lehmann, 1985: 315; Heine et al., 1991: 28ff). Other meaning components such as ‘less/worse than’ (and also ‘restriction’), have been downgraded and do not constitute any conditions for this use any more.

**Different criteria for grammaticalization**

Considering, among other things, the similarities in function between the free morpheme ba in Swedish and the suffix -lah in Malay, there seem to be grounds for the claim that ba in the speech of Swedish adolescents has the grammatical
function to mark that the event described by the sentence in which it occurs is of great importance to the discourse.

A further question is to what extent *ba* satisfies the criteria that are normally used to identify a grammaticalization process. In the following, I will examine this by using criteria that seem to be relevant for free grammatical morphemes.

**Frequency**

Normally, an expression that serves as a source for grammaticalization is frequently and generally used (Heine et al., 1991: 38). According to Allén (1972), the adverb *bara* has a frequency that secures a place among the 68 most common words in Swedish newspaper text. The frequency is, considering the relative informality of *bara* compared to its synonyms, probably even higher in spoken language and the word is, thus, a likely candidate for grammaticalization.

Lehmann (1982: 141f) claims that a grammaticalization process, as a consequence of the form being more or less obligatory, will lead to an increase in frequency. This seems to be the case with the development here described. The use of *ba* in the speech of adolescents greatly exceeds the use of the more traditional *bara* in the speech of grown-ups (including the use in narratives).

**Desemanticalization and expansion**

As Wijk-Andersson has shown, *bara* has, during its history, undergone a continuous weakening of its semantic meaning. From an etymological point of view, *bara* stems from the lexical element *bar* (‘uncovered, naked’). When it started to be used as an adverbial, qualifying first nominal phrases, and later also verb phrases and other elements, it lost some of its semantic components and took on a new grammatical function. This loss of semantic meaning is called ‘desemanticalization’, by Heine and Reh (1984: 36f).

Desemanticalization should, according to these authors, be viewed as a special case of ‘expansion’ (p. 39f). The latter signifies an extension of the functions of the element to new contexts, categories and syntactic positions. The difference between the two is mainly that expansion adds an extra grammatical function to an already grammatical element, while desemanticalization means that a lexical unit receives a grammatical function (which inevitably leads to loss of semantic meaning). In a wider perspective expansion is a process that usually follows desemanticalization, so that a lexical element first develops into a grammatical element by grammaticalization and then receives other grammatical functions. The latter was what happened in Swedish when the grammatical element *bara*, in the language of adolescents, received the new grammatical function to foreground central events in the discourse.
Reduction

One phenomenon that often seems to affect a morpheme undergoing grammaticalization, is reduction of the form: ‘After having undergone cliticization and/or affixation polysyllabic morphemes tend to be reduced to monosyllabics’ (Heine and Reh, 1984: 21). This process has been studied in Melanesian Pidgin, where the adverb baimbai (eng. by and by) has come to express future tense. In this function it is often realized as bai, i.e. the second syllable is lost (Labov, 1970: 16).

The form ba in my material, implies a reduction of the former adverb form bara. It is not clear, however, whether this is due to an ongoing grammaticalization. bara tends to be realized in this way by both adolescents and adults, in unstressed positions, when used in a more traditional way. The reduction may instead be a consequence of a general weakening of /r/ in central Swedish (cf. Gjerđman, 1918: 74).

Distribution

Under the heading of ‘Morphosyntactic processes’, Heine and Reh (1984: 28f), among other things, discuss ‘thematic factors’ and ‘verbal attraction’. The first of these implies that certain positions in the sentence, the initial and the final position, tend to be assigned to constituents that have a topic- or focus function. The second one implies that certain word categories, especially the verb, tend to attract other constituents or categories. This development has been observed with bai in Melanesian Pidgin, mentioned above. Bai, which earlier often had an initial position, now tends to be placed in the position preceding the verb and after the subject (Labov, 1970: 16; Sankoff and Leberge, 1980: 200).

Lehmann (1985: 308f) uses the term ‘fixation’ for the process which gives a certain constituent a fixed place in the sentence instead of, as formerly, having a relatively free distribution. Table 1 shows the positions of ba in the two corpora.

The instances where ba modifies an onomatopoeic expression is excluded from the figures in Table 1. This is more common in the E-corpus (18 occurrences) than in the U+S-corpus (5 occurrences), which is probably explained by the fact that many of the narratives in the former corpus consist of renderings of movies that the persons have seen, which seems to promote the occurrence of such expressions.

Table 1 show that ba in the E-corpus often occurs in final position in the sentence (31 occurrences), a position where the word is not integrated in the sentence structure, while it more rarely occurs in preverbal position (13 occurrences). In the U+S-corpus, however, it is more common to find ba in the preverbal position (19 occurrences), either after the subject or after an
Table 1. Distribution in the sentence of **ba** with foregrounding function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Not structurally integrated</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• before sentence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• after sentence</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Structurally integrated</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• preverbally</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• other positions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

initial adverb, *så* (*so, then*) or the like, than in the unintegrated final position (4 occurrences). According to the figures then, **ba** is more integrated, and also more fixed to one position, in the sentence in the later corpus.

To conclude, **ba** seems to satisfy several of the criteria which characterize an element that is undergoing, or has undergone, grammaticalization: it has its origin in a word that is frequently used and is itself used with an even higher frequency, it has undergone a change in meaning and function and its distribution tends to be more restricted and integrated in the sentence over time. The reduction in form could possibly also be a sign of grammaticalization, but this calls for a more thorough examination.

**Ba as a marker of quotation**

Thus far I have only considered the development leading to **ba** being used as a foregrounding marker. Another important function that **ba** has in the speech of adolescents, is, as I have mentioned above, to introduce quotations. This function seems to have become more important through time. Table 2 shows the relative proportions of **ba** as a foregrounding marker and **ba** as a marker of quotation in the two corpora.

The figures show a radical change in the relative proportion of the two functions. From constituting less than one third (32.7%) of all instances of **ba** in the E-corpus, the quotative function has increased to constituting more than three quarters (76.3%) of the **ba**-instances in the U+S-corpus.

In what follows, I will try to explain how this function has arisen. In order to do this, I will first describe in some detail how **ba** functions as a marker of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotative function</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foregrounding function</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
quotation and how it differs from other means of introducing quotations. This description will primarily concern the difference between ba and säga, the second most frequently used marker of quotation.

It is important to note that the figures in Tables 3 and 4, and the examples, are all drawn from the U+S-corpus. The E-corpus is used only for comparisons over time.

**The frequency of types of quotation markers**

The most common type of quotation in my material is direct quotation, i.e. the type where the speech or thought is reported as if it was what the person actually said or thought at the time of occurrence. I have collected altogether 178 instances of direct quotations. Indirect speech is found, but to a very limited extent.

For an element to be counted as a quotation marker, it must be combined with a subject and the order between these should not deviate from the normal word order of Swedish sentences.

In addition to those cases where the matrix clause is completely missing (unintroduced quotation), there are also a few cases where the subject is omitted, whereas there are no cases where a quotation is introduced by a subject alone. The omission of the subject in matrix clauses with quotation markers usually constructed with a subject, is treated as a case of more casual, context dependent omission. The important thing is that the marker type as such, not every single instance of it, should obey the constraint above. This restriction is motivated by the fact that I do not want to decide, at this point, whether the frequently occurring words så här (like this) and liksom (like), in any sense function as quotation markers. They often occur in direct connection to (normally after) a quotation, but never in combination with a subject in the way described (See examples 8, 9, 13 and 14 below). The frequency of the different types of quotation markers is shown in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markers</th>
<th>Number of instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ba</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>säga 'say'</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø (= unmarked)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fråga 'ask'</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>komma 'come'</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>berätta 'tell'</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tänka 'think'</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deborah Tannen (1986: 315) has shown that the counterparts to Swedish säga ‘say’ are the most commonly used quotation markers in English and Greek, both in written and spoken language. According to Garme (1988: 100), säga predominates as quotation marker in written compositions by Swedish high school pupils. That säga is so common is probably due to the fact that it is the most neutral of the quotation markers. Romaine and Lange have suggested for say in English that ‘It is because say reports speech without contributing some particular pragmatic effect that it is unmarked, and therefore the most frequently used verb of saying’ (Romaine and Lange, 1991: 235). In my corpus of narratives, however, säga is only the second most common marker of quotation. Slightly more than 27% of all quotation markers consist of säga, while the most common marker ba is used in almost 50% of the cases. Moreover, one of the central functions of ba seems to be exactly to convey a particular pragmatic effect—that the quotation that it introduces is in some way remarkable.

Differences in morpho-syntactic characteristics and quotative content.

One major difference between ba and säga concerns the type of content of the introduced quotations. Säga can only introduce quotations that report something that should be interpreted as something a person said, as in the following examples:

(7) å då kommer ja i håg att vi stod på lågstadietrappen (så) sa hon så här *ska ja göra de* då sa ja så här *du får göra som du vill* ungefär *för de kan ju inte ja avgöra.*

And then call I to mind that we were standing on the school’s stairs (then) said she like this *shall I do it* then said I like this *you should do as you like* roughly *cause that can well not I decide.*

And then I remember that we were standing on the school’s stairs and she asked me if she should do it [break up with her boyfriend]. And I said that it was for her to decide because I couldn’t decide that.

(8) alla sa *ja vi bor i Sverige* så här.
all said *yes we live in Sweden* like this.
they all said ‘yes we live in Sweden.’

(9) vänder han sig om han stod liksom på huk typ å knöt skosnörena (dom andra) stod bakom (.) *men ja vet vad du ska ha* sa han så här.

turns he around he was like squatting roughly and tying the shoe laces (the others) were standing behind (.) *but I know what you shall have* said he like this.

He turned around. He was squatting, tying his shoe laces. And the others were standing behind him. ‘I know what you deserve’ he said.
This restriction is, of course, a direct consequence of the lexical meaning of säga. This kind of content can also be introduced by ba:

(10) kom ja till centrum så här me stora braller å en träja å en sån här träja som ba hängde så här(.) Anki å Malin ba(.) *oh jävla hippie.*
came I to the center like this with big trousers and a sweater—and one such here sweater that was just hanging like this(.) Anki and Maria just(.) *oh bloody hippie.*

_I came to the center dressed in baggy trousers and a sweater that were much too big. Anki and Maria said to me ‘oh bloody hippie’._

(11) hon ba *okay ja gör de för ja tycker inte om honom.*
she just *okay I do it cause I like not him.*

_She said ‘Okay, I will do it because I don’t like him’._

But ba can also introduce quotations whose content is not necessarily something that someone uttered, but more likely is something that the person in question thought:

(12) å så efter ett tag /.../ kom den första fram(.) men den andra kom inte fram så här(.) ja ba *hjälp* liksom *va e den* () å alla va i vattnet å leta ja ba (.) *he de* (.) *hej* så här *pinsamt hörru.*

and then after a while /.../ came the first one out(.) but the other one come not out like this(.) I just *help* like this *where is it* (.) and all were in the water searching(.) I just (.)(.) *he de* (.)(.) *hi* like this *embarrassing hear you.*

_After a while the first one [a contact lens] appeared, but the other one didn’t. I said/thought, ‘Help, where is it’. And they [her friends] were in the water looking for it. I said/thought He, de, hi, this is very embarrassing, you know’._

(13) då ja ramlade av [...] ((skratt)) () ja tycker de va skitballt ja ba () *ha
nu har ja ramlat av* liksom.

when I fell off [...] ((laughter)) () I think it was very funny I just (.) *yeah
now have I fallen off* like

_When I fell off. I think it was a lot of fun. I said/thought ‘Yes, now I have fallen off’._

In many cases it is hard to decide whether the words cited represent an utterance or not. It is certain, however, that if it is an utterance, this utterance is not primarily communicative; in these examples the narrator expresses her own emotional reaction to what happened but is not directly addressing a listener, and does not demand a response.

Furthermore, ba can introduce direct representation of laughter, gasps, moans, etc:

(14) så böjde han mej framåt så här så ja ba uuhhh så här liksom.
then bent he me forward like this so I just uuuuh like this like.

Then he bent me forward so I just screamed [was scared].

(15) hon sa så här *jaa har ni redan börjat va ihop* för de va ju liksom inte va ihop ungefära (0.4) *ja har ni redan börjat va ihop* vi ba *hi hi.*

she said like this *yeah have you already started being together* cause that was well like not really being together kind of (0.4) *yeah have you already started being together* we just *hi hi.*

She [the teacher] asked ‘So you have already started being together’. But at that time it wasn’t being together in the real sense. ‘So you have already started being together’. We laughed.

The above examples also show other differences between ba and säga. One such difference is that ba, originally an adverb, unlike the verb säga, is unmarked for tense. Because of this, the distinction present/past tense is collapsed, and ba can, as a result, be used with the same directness as historical present, which makes it very suitable for performed narratives (Wolfson, 1982: 25).

Another consequence of ba’s origin as a non-verb is its restricted syntactic distribution. While säga occurs in matrix clauses, that can be placed before (examples 7–8) or after (example 9) the quoted sentence, ba is only found in matrix clauses preceding the quotation (examples 10–15).

The matrix clauses containing ba always have SV-word order, i.e. ba is always placed after the subject, while those containing säga in most, but not all cases have VS-word order. In the sentences that contain ba, there is no element that can cause inversion, since the only elements preceding the subject are the co-ordinators och (and) and så (so). Säga, moreover, is often accompanied by a deictic så här, which is never the case with ba6.

One further difference between säga and ba is that the former can carry stress, while the latter is normally unstressed.

**Alternation between ba and säga**

There are also substantial differences between ba and säga concerning their distribution in the stories. In example (16) the same course of events is related by two different persons, two girls aged 12:

(16) A: Vet du vad Kent sa igår?

Know you what Kent said yesterday?

*Do you know what Kent said yesterday?* M: Nät vadå?

No what?

No. What?
E: Vet du va han sa igår (0.4) hur va de (.) Malin blev så sur på honom så hår (.) så hon skrek åt honom så här (0.4) så här nära honom (0.6) hon sa så hår *kan du hålla käften* han ba (.) *måste du spotta så mycke?*

You know what he said yesterday (0.4) how was it (.) Malin was so mad at him like this (.) so she shouted at him like this (0.4) like this close to him (0.6) she said like this (.) *can you shut up* he just (.) *must you spit so much?*

*Do you know what he [children at a summer camp] said yesterday? She [a leader at a summer camp] was angry at him. Standing very close to him, she said 'Can you shut up'. And he said 'Do you have to spit so much?'

A: Nå de sa han inte.

No that he said not.

No, he didn't say that.

E: Nå.

No.

No.

A: Han- hon sa så här (.) *kan du prata i normal samtalston* skrek han allt vad han or- eller hon allt vad hon orka han ba (.) *kan du spotta i normal mängd* så här ((skratt)).

He- she said like this (.) *can you speak in a normal conversational tone* shouted he as loud as he cou- or she as loud as she could he just (.) *Can you spit in a normal amount* like this ((laughter)).

She said 'can you speak in a normal conversational tone', or rather she shouted as loud as she could. And he said 'Can you spit in a normal amount'.

The first narrator is corrected by her friend who thinks she has been telling the story in an incorrect and clumsy way. What is interesting for our concern is that the two girls use the quotation markers in the same places. Säga is used for the first utterance in the represented conversation, ba for the second. And there is an obvious difference between the two utterances. It is the second one that is remarkable and unexpected, the one that constitutes the point of the story.

In examples (17) and (18), ba functions in much the same way as in example (16). Here, too, the function of ba is to indicate that the narrator thinks the utterance is in some way remarkable and at the same time it expresses his/her emotional attitude (approval and disapproval respectively) towards the utterance:

(17) Å så här (.) hon vi bodde hos då (.) mamman i familjen typ (.) mamman i familjen (.) hon ba *jaa ja måste ta me er ti en pub så här som e (.) skitbra här i (.) närheten så här ni måste följa me mej dit de e skitbra där kan ja bjuda* så här (.) skitschysst (.) de vart inte så.
And like this (.) she we lived with then (.) the mother in the family kind of (.) the mother in the family (.) she just *well I have to take you to a pub* like this which is (.) very good here in (.) the neighbourhood like this you must go with me there (.) it is very good there I can treat* (.) fucking nice (.) It was not so.

The mother in the family we stayed with, she said, 'I will take you to a pub some time, one which is very good. It's near here. You must come along. It is very good. I will buy you drinks.' Very nice of her. We never went though.

(18) va e den där Micke (.) han e ju helt spångig Jutte nå ja mena eh elle Christer spruta ju in honom i tandkräm han ba *du ska hämnd* (.) säger han till mej liksom då gullgossen en liten mes e va han e.

where is that Micke (.) he is well completely stupid Jutte no I mean eh or Christer squirted well in him in tooth paste he just (.) *you should have revenge* (.) said he to me like then little darling a little coward that's what he is.

Where is Micke? He’s completely stupid. Christer squirted toothpaste at him and then Micke said that he would get his revenge on me. He’s not a darling, he’s a coward.

A somewhat different function is found in example (19) where the narrator is identical with the cited speaker:

(19) fråga hon så här (0.8) vilken klass går du (.) femman (.) hej kompis kommer de då (0.4) vilken klass går du då (.) *ja går också i femman* ja ba (0.4) *va (.) e de sant*

asked she like this (0.8) what grade go you (.) fifth (.) hi mate comes it then (0.4) what grade go you then (.) *I go also in fifth* I just (0.4) *what (.) is it true*

She asked me what grade I’m in. And I told her I’m in fifth grade. ‘Hi mate’, she said. ‘What grade are you in then’, I asked. ‘I’m also in fifth’, she replied. And I said I thought, ‘What, is that true’.

In this example, six utterances are reproduced. But it is not until the last one, where the narrator expresses her own surprise, that ba is used. The same is true for example (20), where the utterance that is introduced by ba expresses emotional devotion.

(20) näst sista dan eller nånting så här så ba börja dom jaga oss med bilar å hålla på så här dom va sjutton år dom hade precis fått (.) körkort typ (.) dom jaga oss me bilar å ville döda oss å vi ba *nej*

the second last day or something like this then just started they hunting us with cars and go on like this they were seventeen years they hade just got (.) driver’s licence roughly (.) they were hunting us with cars and wanted to kill us and we just *no*
The second last day they started hunting us with cars. They were seventeen years old and had just got their driver’s licence. They were hunting us with cars and wanted to kill us. We shouted/thought ‘No’.

This nej seems to express the fear that the boys experienced. In example (21), on the other hand, the expressed feeling is embarrassment.

(21) kom ja till centrum me stora braller å en tröja som ba hängde så här (. ) Anki å Malin ba (. ) öh jävla hippie ja ba hm tack.

came I to the center like this with big trousers and a sweater- and one such here sweater that was just hanging like this (. ) Anki and Maria just (. ) *oh bloody hippie* I just *hm thanks*

I came to the center dressed in baggy trousers and a sweater that were much too big. Anki and Maria said to me 'Oh bloody hippie', I said/thought, 'Hm thanks'.

As the examples show, ba seems to function basically in two different ways (which are both present in example 21). Either it is used by the narrator to express his or her emotional attitude (negative or positive) towards the utterance that is rendered in the quotation, or it is used to introduce utterances that in themselves are expressions of the emotional attitude of the dramatic personae towards other events in the story. By showing his/hers (or someone else’s) emotional attitude towards these events and actions in the story, the narrator communicates to the listener that these are important in the story and are part of its point.

An obvious difference between ba and the other quotation markers in my material can be found in the kind of subjects they usually combine with. Table 4. shows how the marker types combine with subjects in first and third person, singular and plural.

As the table shows, there is a great tendency for ba to combine with first person singular (55–20), while säga and other markers (tänka ‘think’ is an

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ba</th>
<th>säga</th>
<th>Ø</th>
<th>fråga</th>
<th>komma</th>
<th>berätta</th>
<th>tänka</th>
<th>others</th>
<th>ba/others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sg:</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1p</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3p</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
exception) more often combine with subjects in third person singular (såga 31–12; unintroduced 16–5; etc.). The dominance of ba as a marker of quotation is thus not the whole truth. It holds true only in first person singular, but in this case the dominance is the greater.

The figures reflect the two tendencies of ba which I have discussed above: ba is used to introduce things other than real utterances, for example thoughts and laughter and ba has the pragmatic function of expressing someone’s emotional attitude towards the related events. The narrator has, of course, first of all access to his or her own thoughts and emotions and it is therefore quite natural that these are more often reproduced, than the thoughts and emotions of other persons.

The connection between the function of ba to express the emotions and attitudes of the narrator and its high frequency in the material is also in line with Nordberg’s claim that one main characteristic of the language of adolescents is that it is very emotional (Nordberg, 1984: 22).

To conclude, the quotation marker såga (and other common markers such as fråga ‘ask’ and berätta ‘tell’ and also unintroduced quotations) is used mainly for utterances which the narrator is emotionally quite indifferent to, while ba, in addition to the function of introducing quotation, also seems to have the foregrounding function discussed in section 3; not any reproduced utterance can be introduced by ba, but only those that are in some way remarkable and emotionally engage the narrator, and thus contribute to the point of the story.

One can assume that the foregrounding function is prior to the quotative function, since the former, but not the latter, can be derived from the characteristics of the more traditional bara. This is also in accordance with the fact that the use of ba with quotative function seems to increase over time.

That ba is so often being used to foreground quotations can be explained by the important role which quotations and especially direct quotations play in stories. Labov (1972: 372f) has pointed out that reported speech constitutes one of the most important ways for the narrator to evaluate the events in the story. This description, however, has been criticized by Toolan (1988), who argues that Labov has underestimated the role of quotations in the event structure of the story. Toolan says: ‘And in our increasingly verbal world, where growing numbers of us make our living through our verbal work rather than our non-verbal actions, we may predict that ‘what is said (written/promised/denied/argued/etc.)’ will more commonly constitute the essential complicating action in narratives (p. 158). Li (1986: 40) reports results which show that ‘direct quote, but not indirect quote, typically occurs as the peak of narrative’. Garme (1991: 18) has shown that Swedish adolescents, when retelling a story, tend to reproduce important utterances in the form of direct quotations.
Changes over time

The quotative function is becoming more established over time. Table 5 shows how quotative *ba* in the two corpora differs according to the extent to which it is combined with a subject⁹, and that *ba*, in addition to the increase in overall frequency, tends to become combined more often with a subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>with subject</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without subject</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before sentence</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after sentence</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This can be explained in the following way. Because of its foregrounding function, *ba* is often used with quotations (which tend either to represent important events in the narrative or to be used to evaluate such events). As a result, many speakers have come to interpret *ba* as a quotation marker, and have therefore, by analogy with other markers of quotations, started to combine it with a subject. In other words, the more *ba* is conceived as a marker of quotation, the more it is made similar to other markers of quotation. There is however, as I have mentioned, still one substantial difference between *ba* and other markers of quotation, i.e. verbs of saying: *ba* has no tense marking device attached to it.

Examples such as the following, which can be found in a few instances in my material, could have played a role as a model.

(22) dom ba *va* säge ba (.*) men jag har rom*
they just *what* say just (*) but I have them*
They said ‘What’ and [I] said ‘But I have them’

(23) så sa hon ba *Nä men Jessica*
then said she just *No but Jessica*
Then she said ‘But Jessica’

(24) ja kunde ju inte säga så här ba *hejsan (*) hörru e de du som va ihop
me (*) Elsie förut*
I could well not say like this just *hi (*) hear you is it you that was together
with (*) Elsie before*

*I couldn’t say ‘Hi, aren’t you the guy who used to live with Elsie before’*
In these examples, which stress the fact that *ba* is primarily a foregrounding marker, *ba* is used along with a verb of saying, which serves the quotative function. This verb, being more or less redundant, can easily be deleted, leaving a construction with the subject and *ba*.

**The direction of the grammaticalization process**

How, then, does the development described by *ba* fit into what is usually assumed about the development of meaning during a grammaticalization process? I will discuss this in terms of the model formulated by Elizabeth Traugott, which I mentioned briefly in section 2.1. I will also compare *ba*’s development with the development undergone by the word *like* in English, mainly American English.

Traugott (1982) describes the semantic development of a word undergoing grammaticalization in terms of three functional-semantic components within the language system: a propositional, a textual and an interpersonal component. The propositional component includes the elements that contribute to the truth-value of the sentence, and also elements that connect it to the context in the actual situation (deictic elements). The textual component contains those elements that create the cohesiveness of the discourse. And in the interpersonal component one finds those elements in a text that are used to express personal attitudes towards something in the communicative situation: the subject matter, the text or the participants.

Development can occur both within and between these components and Traugott formulates two hypotheses about this development. According to the first one, it is more likely that the development is taking place from the propositional to the textual to interpersonal component than in the opposite direction. According to the second hypothesis, the development within one component is normally from a less personal to a more personal meaning. More personal here means: 'More anchored in the context of the speech act, particularly the speaker’s orientation to situation, text and interpersonal relations' (p. 253).

A problem with Traugott’s model is that it is hard to separate a development towards a more personal meaning within one component from a development towards the interpersonal component (Brinton, 1988: 98). In a revised version of the model (Traugott, 1989), the difference seems to be that the development within a component, which mainly takes place within the propositional component and is described as a development of the meaning from being based in the external situation to being based in the internal situation, refers to the situation as perceived by a sentient being, not necessarily the speaker. The development towards the interpersonal component, on the other hand, is said to involve an increase in meaning that has to do with the subjective attitude of the speaker.
FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC COMPONENTS

PROPOSITIONAL (TEXTUAL) INTERPERSONAL

ADJECTIVE (bar)

ADVERB (bar) FOREGROUNDING MARKER (ba)

QUOTATION MARKER (ba)

Fig. 2. The development of *bara* in Swedish.

Figure 2 describes schematically the development of *bara* in terms of Traugott’s components.

The development from the adjective *bara* to the adverb *bara* involves a change within the propositional component from a meaning related to the external concrete situation (uncovered, naked) to a meaning related to the internal, abstract situation, i.e. the situation as perceived by someone (‘nothing other than’).

In some cases *ba* is used with a very prominent subjective meaning feature, expectation and attitude, as in for example *Han bara stod där, medan vi andra slogs* (*He was just standing there, while we were fighting*) or *jag bara skrek* (*I just screamed*). And it seems that it is from cases like these that the foregrounding function in the speech of adolescents has developed. Since the subjective meaning is predominant, this is a clear case of transition to the interpersonal component.

In Figure 2, the quotative function has been placed under the textual component. (Romaine and Lange, 1991: 261) argue that *like* in English, which has come to function as a quotation marker in examples such as *And she’s like, Um well that’s cool*, is to be considered as a conjunction subordinating a quotative clause. The argument for this is, in addition to *like*’s origin as a conjunction, that *like* lacks lexical meaning and therefore can subordinate any content what so ever. *Like* should essentially be considered a textual device for marking what follows as something reported. The same argument can probably be used to place *ba* under the textual component, although *ba* does not have a past as a conjunction.

The development suggested for *like* by Romaine and Lange is shown in Figure 3. It shows that *like*, originally a preposition, as in *She looks like her father*, and thus part of the propositional component, has come to function as a conjunction, in for example *Winston tastes good like a cigarette should*, which
FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC COMPONENTS

PROPOSITIONAL  (TEXTUAL)  INTERPERSONAL

PREPOSITION  \rightarrow  CONJUNCTION  \rightarrow  DISCOURSE MARKER  \rightarrow  QUOTATION MARKER

Fig. 3. The development of *like* in American English.

Involves a transition to the textual component. From this function there are two further developments. *Like* has come to function as a discourse marker, as in *And there were like people blocking, you know* and as a quotation marker. The first of these developments involves a transition to the interpersonal component, while the second one is viewed as a transition within the textual component. Romaine and Lange (1991: 262) claim that the steps they describe can hardly be seen as strictly sequential: ‘A simple linear model of grammaticalization is inadequate to account for these developments. What may emerge from grammaticalization is a network of related meanings of an item.’

In contrast to *like*, it is more probable that the development of *ba* took place in a strict sequence, although some of the old and new forms still overlap. This can be argued from the fact that the quotative function presupposes the foregrounding function and also from the increasing frequency of *ba* as a marker of quotation (Table 2.). Moreover, the development of *ba* as described in Figure 2, where the quotative function of *ba* is placed under the textual component, constitutes an exception to the hypothesis by Traugott, which says that the development is most likely to go from the propositional to the textual to the interpersonal component.

Conclusions

In this paper I have given a description of the new functions taken on by the word *bara* as used by a certain group of speakers, adolescents aged 10–14, and also claimed that these functions are tied to a certain speech genre, the story.

I have shown how properties specific to the story as a speech genre have played an important part in the development of these functions. Thus, the need of the speaker to differentiate between central and peripheral events in the story provide a necessary condition for the frequent use of *ba* as a foregrounding marker, while the importance of the quotations in stories along with the possibility of omitting the tense marking device (since the interpretation of past tense is given by the story context) has conditioned the second, more striking, function of introducing quotations.
I have also shown that the development I have outlined provides an exception to what is generally assumed about the direction of grammaticalization. That ba first receives the function of expressing the attitude of the speaker, and then, later, takes on a text binding function is not compatible with the path of development suggested by Traugott’s model. It is, however, entirely in line with Herring (1991)’s refusal of the unidirectionality of the grammaticalization process. Her study of rhetorical questions in Tamil shows that the extension of functions can just as well take place from the expressive to the textual component as the other way around.

Concerning the further development of ba, there are, generally speaking, two possibilities. According to the first, and perhaps the most likely, ba will remain for a time in the speech of adolescents and then eventually disappear. This is because ba belongs to a part of the language which has a weak position—spoken language—and in addition the spoken language of a group with quite low status in society at large. On the other hand, it is conceivable that ba with time will become more established as a quotation marker and will spread to other groups of speakers and other contexts. If this happens, ba could completely lose its emotional meaning and could be used also with quotations that are more neutral.

A theoretically possible result of such a development would be that ba develops into a fully-fledged quotation marker, i.e. that it develops a tense marking morphology, and is able to be constructed with subordinate clauses and has the same distribution as other markers of quotations. However, since there is no evidence that such a development has ever taken place in the course of language history, this does not seem to be a very likely alternative, particularly since prescriptive norms would probably react negatively to such a change.

Ba is not absolutely tied to the speech of adolescents, but is spreading to older speakers as well, though this development is quite slow. The core group of ba-users is found among speakers from ten to fifteen, but it is also used among speakers above twenty and it can even be heard from people close to thirty (which seems to correspond with the assumption that ba was first used in the middle of the nineteen seventies), although these older speakers don’t seem to use it so frequently.

A development where ba as a quotation marker would eventually become a natural part of the speech of adults is, considering the strong normative role of the written language in our society, perhaps not so likely. If one, on the other hand, imagines a society where the normative power of the written language was much less profound than in ours, then the outlined changes would have a better chance of lasting.
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NOTES

1 I will throughout this text employ the form ba for the new functions in adolescents’ speech and the form bar a for the older, more traditional uses of bara, although there is no strict correspondence between form and function. The form bara is also used to refer to both variants, when there is a need for a comprehensive term.

2 Cf. Blott, enbart, endast, uteslutande, allena, and allennast, all have a meaning that partly overlaps with the meaning of bara, and have varying syntactical and stylistical distribution. Blott, allena and allennast are considered archaic and/or poetic except in some expressions, while the others are mostly used in more formal (written) language than bara.

3 Cf. p. 13 below.

4 The transcriptions are made in partly speech-adjusted orthography. The following symbols are also used: (.) pause, maximum 0.1 second (0.2) pause, length in seconds within parenthesis (.) material within parenthesis indicates that the transcriber was uncertain about the hearing * * change of voice quality ba the word or words that the example primarily concerns are given in bold letter type.

5 The differences between direct and indirect speech have been widely debated. See Coulmas (1986) for an overview.

6 Så här is very frequent in the stories, not only used (accompanying säga) to introduce quotations, but also as a device that delimits different parts of the story from each other, for example different narrative clauses or, as in example (8), a quotation from what comes after it.

7 I will employ the terms 1st and 3rd person without aiming at a strictly grammatical use. Instead they denote different kinds of agents of the actions, with or without overt marking, and can thus be applied also to unintroduced quotations.

8 When the subject is in the plural, the frequency is higher for 3rd person than for 1st person. Since these figures are quite low, I will refrain from trying to give any explanations for this.

9 The numbers for the U+S-material in Table 5 deviate from those shown in Table 3. The reason for this is that Table 3 does not show two instances of ba placed in final position since ba is used twice in these sentences.

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