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# *In substance, they came from above*

## On the acquisition of discourse particles in Medieval Spanish

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This paper presents a study on discourse particles in the history of the Spanish language. The research focuses on explaining the socio-cultural context which led to the appearance of some particles by means other than those contemplated in the theory of grammaticalization. By monitoring the history of the discourse particle *en sustancia* we explain how many of the changes undergone in the Spanish language in the plane of textual construction came from above, were taken directly from the medieval Latin of books and inserted into communicative distance texts, subsequently spreading to become standard.

**Keywords:** Medieval Spanish, discourse traditions, historical sociolinguistics, *en sustancia*, discourse particles

### 1. Discourse particles: *Ausbau* and linguistic elaboration

#### 1.1 The social gap of grammaticalization theory

Diachronic studies on the history of discourse particles in the Spanish language have revolved around two main themes. On the one hand, case studies of particles or groups of particles used in a specific period have been carried out, while on the other the origin of current discourse particles, especially conversational ones, has been sought in medieval texts. In the case of this last category, the theory of grammaticalization has been invaluable as the analysis of *clines* of change has been explained as a lexical element which gradually acquired a grammar and discourse function.<sup>1</sup>

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1. As is known, this has given rise to an interesting theoretical discussion on whether it is possible to place the origin of discourse particles in the classic theory of grammaticalization. In fact, while in the processes for origin and fixation of markers we studied some of the structural

The study of discourse particles has resulted in the theory of a grammaticalization framework – with its functionalist pragmatic-discourse foundations – which can be remodelled after being applied to a corpus of examples which are out of the ordinary. Thus, while the theory of grammaticalization worked for years for cases of evolution typically resulting in auxiliaries, clitics, and adverbials, in the case of the origin of discourse particles it encountered some features which fitted the classic criteria of theory while others appeared to contradict it. This led to a reformulation of the limits of grammaticalization. The key lies in distinguishing whether or not the origin and development of these elements fall within the category of grammaticalization. As this simultaneous and parallel debate on whether the appearance of a new discourse particle is due to grammaticalization has coincided with this research and other related case studies, new examples have appeared for use in further research. However, due to limitations in length, this is not the place to expound on the theory of grammaticalization and the debate on which types of processes represent such changes or the controversy over their characteristic features.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, although many of the elements which form part of the current repertoire of Spanish particles are the result of semantic changes stemming from updated inferences linked to specific constructions (cfr. for one of the first particles studied, *encima*, Garachana 2008), other discourse particles did not come to be in the same way. It is

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changes that are characteristic of grammaticalization processes (decategorization, syntagm fixation, semantic bleaching), other parameters like the reduction of syntactic freedom do not occur. Discussion on this has led to the reorganization of the formal parameters seen as typical of grammaticalization as well as the formulation of a new cline model (cf. Ajmer 1997; Dostie 2004; Mosegaard Hansen / Rossari 2005; Traugott 1997; Octavio de Toledo y Huerta 2001–2002 among others).

2. In the transition from nominal or verbal elements or deictic expressions to discourse particles we can observe some structural changes associated with a grammaticalization process: decategorization, syntagm fixation, generalization of meanings. However, these are contradicted by equally important elements such as an increase in syntactic freedom and scope gain, as units with more positional freedom than their starting points appear. This has led to the theory that the appearance of discourse particles cannot be grammaticalization, as these are not strictly speaking part of grammar. That is to say, if grammaticalization creates a system, discourse particles cannot be considered strictly speaking part of the system. Therefore, the question arises as to whether the appearance of discourse particles ought to be understood as a grammaticalization phenomenon or as a different mechanism (alternative or even opposed to grammaticalization), in which discourse is created from the system. Traugott's (1997) contribution is one of the most frequently cited contributions to this debate for its proposal to redefine the classic parameters of grammaticalization, examining the proposed obligatory nature of some of these. This is the case of the role awarded to unidirectionality within grammaticalization channels. It has gone from being presented in standard theory as a constant principle to being considered a very common index in this type of process, but not a criterion used to refute whether or not a change constitutes grammaticalization.

at this point that it becomes necessary to fall back on the explanation of the social diffusion (which is textual after all) of any linguistic change.

Without denying the vital importance of the theory of grammaticalization in the explanation of how specific particles come to be, attention should be drawn to the gap in this theory as regards the explanation of the social diffusion of linguistic change. Dissemination in texts – in itself an echo of the spread through the linguistic system – can provide very interesting information on the possible relation between the origin of specific particles aimed at textual construction and cohesion, and the macroprocesses for linguistic elaboration periodically found in Romance languages.

## 1.2 Discourse particles that came from above: Social context and elaboration

Many grammaticalizations of discourse particles have as starting point a semantic change resulting from updated inferences linked to a specific construction. These semantic changes arise in dialogic interaction, and as they are born from the subjectivization of a context, they reach the less elaborate texts first and are later transferred to more cultured ones. However, there is an alternative to this conventional method for the appearance of particles: particles which, due to an idiomatic elaboration process, come into the language directly to be incorporated with fully formed discourse meanings into texts. It is impossible to verify the existence of semantic change due to associated inferences, as there is no progression towards the systematic coding of an occasional inferential meaning found between its first use and use as discourse particles.

These appear because there is a new discourse tradition requiring these markers in some way (usually as a cohesive device) and they are adapted, loaned or translated from another language in which they already circulate. The diffusion of discourse particles resulting from the grammaticalization of discourse inferences ranges from communicative immediacy to communicative distance (without necessarily reaching the latter), given that discourse particles deriving from processes of elaboration through loans have a different conceptual profile. They are linked to the sphere of conceptual writings and are socially diffused from above (cfr. Jacob, and Kabatek 2001: X).

This type of change has been studied for other languages, and can be usefully applied to Romance languages and the elaboration processes brought about by the recording in Romance of discourse traditions secularly written in Latin from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance.

An alternative theoretical model to that of grammaticalization is the socio-linguistic theory of elaboration (Kloss 1952 [1978]; Muljačić 1986), which explains

how languages expand their possibilities for use following the arrival of new elements and new types of text. In fact, at a functional level this enriching can result from *extensive elaboration* (Koch, and Oesterreicher 2007: 17) which allows the language to attain new discourse characteristic of communicative distance. It can also occur at a formal level, with *intensive elaboration* which increases the volume of terminological lexical elements, pieces for the construction of textual cohesion, syntactic structures... As linguistic change is a constant factor in living languages the elaboration processes often occur at specific periods. After a macrostage of elaboration, the language affected develops a greater capacity to express communicative distance, reduces linguistic variation, and reinforces textual architecture.

Labov's theoretical model was reused by German variational linguistics, as inspired by Coseriu, to provide an explanation in the specific field of Western languages for the importance of the precedent of Latin as a model for written production. In fact Latin has provided the written models for its daughter languages, giving rise to linguistic transfers (in both directions, also from Romance to neo Latin, cfr. Ijsewin, and Sacré 1998) of forms and structures transferred directly from the Latin of texts to the Romance of books. This type of transfer from Latin is not only observed in Romance languages as demonstrated in recent studies on structures of discourse cohesion loaned from Latin to English (Del Saz, and Pennock 2005; Rissanen 2006; Weber 2009). In fact, the reading in Latin of religious, philosophical, and historiographic works, the influence of the Roman Legislative corpus, and the circulation of the *Vulgate* define a linguistic area transcending the genealogical family of Romance languages, and in which Latin is a model of intensive and extensive elaboration.

In the case of Spanish, it has been recorded that discourse particles such as *así las cosas* (Pons Rodríguez 2015), *esto es* (Pons Bordería 2008), *respecto a* and associated structures (Pons Rodríguez 2017) or *vale decir* (Garrido Martín 2015), are some of the forms born in the *locus* of communicative distance, outside dialogic interaction, and disseminated directly in texts as discourse particles, thus demonstrating linguistic change *from above*. Syntagms such as SIC STANTIBUS REBUS, ID EST, CUM RESPECTU AD OR DICERE VALET have passed directly from Medieval Latin to Medieval Romance, transferring meanings and equivalences or expanding functions.

This new approach to the generation of resources of internal elaboration of the language calls for philological studies on the history of linguistic change. That is, we hold that it is impossible to carry out a lineal and intrinsic historical study of discourse particles. Analyses need to be anchored on social and cultural phenomena such as the birth or development of new directions in discourse, the study of communicative space of speakers and others. One of the discourse particles which spread from Medieval Latin to the Romance languages was *en sustancia*, as studied below.

## 2. The history of the Spanish discourse particle *en sustancia*

### 2.1 SUBSTANTIA and its legacy

The Latin word SUBSTANTIA left its legacy in Romance (1) and in non-Romance Western languages (2). In all of these it has as a common meaning with the idea of ‘matter, basic component of an element’.

- (1) *substancia* (Galician); *substance* (French); *sostanza* (Italian); *substanță* (Romanian).
- (2) *substans* (Norwegian, Swedish); *substantzia* (Basque); *substance* (English); *supstanca* (Bosnian); *substanz* (German); *sustanza* (Maltese).

These uses are clearly derived from the meaning of the Latin term SUBSTANTIA (3), which can be grouped into fixed locutions. In the case of legal Latin we observe ERROR IN SUBSTANTIA, a term applicable to sale and purchase contracts which refers to a problem in the material composition of the element bought (Petrač 2011). In Medieval Latin this noun is especially frequent in theological discourses which debate on the human or divine nature of the person of Jesus Christ and matters of Christian dogma. As is seen in the examples of (3) and (4), there are instances of SUBSTANTIA preceded by the preposition IN and apparently not fixed as a locution. The examples in the prose of Thomas Aquinas offer instances of IN SUBSTANTIA as mere modal circumstantial complement. Other similar 13th century Latin examples are also found in philosophical works:

- (3) *In substantia* autem intellectuali creata inveniuntur duo: scilicet substantia ipsa; et esse eius, quod non est ipsa substantia, ut ostensum est (*Summa contra gentiles* lib.2, 553, 2, 6) || Cum enim sit sancta Trinitas unus et solus Deus, *in substantia* solus, in personis tria quaedam, cum multa uoluit esse, non illud ‘esse’ ea uoluit esse quod ille ipse est, dum ea quae uoluit esse originem habent; illi siquidem sine origine est esse.

(Alcuino, *De fide sanctae et indiuiduae trinitatis*,  
liber 2, capitulum 1, 47, 16)

- (4) *In substantia* tangit, cum dicit subsistens per se, sicut convenit personae subsistere. (Alberto Magno, *Commentarii in primum librum Sententiarum*, distinctio: 27 G, 4, 26, 43, 1, 36)

In contrast, in Latin from the Early Middle Ages, IN SUBSTANTIA is frequently recorded linked to a *verbum dicendi*. The wealth of documentation suggests that this use spread from the prose of the scholars of monastic universities and schools, who wrote about theology in books that circulated throughout Europe. Latin, universal

language of culture in the Middle Ages, invented a locution which neo Latin continued to use profusely:

- (5) Hanc sententiam sequitur Scotus in tertio, dictinctione decimatercia, ad argumenta circa tertiam conclusionem, vbi *in substantia* respondet ad idem argumentum. (1589, Conradus Koellin, *Expositio commentaria prima...*)
- (6) Vbi relatis aliis distinctionibus secundum Theologos dixit superstitionem esse [...] & idem in substantia, dixit Eymeric. (1616, Prosperi Farinacii, *Tractatus de haeresi*, p. 62)
- (7) Probo, quia Praelatus consentiens vt suffragia darentur pro illo, fecit actum contrarium illi, quem antea fecerat acceptando renunciacionem, & *in substantia* dixit per hoc factum. (1640, *Responsiones aliquorum casuum moralium*, p. 677)

Its use with verbs such as DICERE, RESPONDERE or others are, as we will see, key to the transformation of this syntagm into a discourse particle. The texts produced in Medieval and Golden-Age Spain in written contexts establish a dialogue between Latin and Romance languages, as can be seen from the continued transfer of written elements to the daughter language (for example, in the form of graphic representations, syntactical and lexical loads or learned expressions) as well as in the appearance of vernacular elements in the mother language, morphologically disguised as Latin.

## 2.2 Use of *in sustancia* in current Spanish

Words belonging to the lexical family of *sustancia* (*sustancial*, *sustancioso*, *sustanciar*) can be written in two forms in Spanish: with the etymological consonant group sometimes simplified to *s* alone, despite the fact that the most frequent phonic use in Spanish as stated in the Spanish spelling system (specifically in *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas* published by the Spanish regulatory body, the Real Academia Española (s.v. *sustancia*) states that “se recomiendan las grafías simplificadas, por ser acordes con la articulación real de estas palabras y las más extendidas en el uso actual”). Among the examples considered, mostly taken from the CORDE and CREA databases, also drawn up by the Real Academia Española, we searched for examples of the form in all the numerous spellings possible.

At present, *en sustancia* is used in Spanish with two possible functions. It can act as a circumstantial complement affecting a verb or noun within a construction where the noun *sustancia* has preserved its full meaning. This can be seen in cases such as:

- (8) Aunque la ley ha de ir a la Cámara de los Lores, parece improbable que la modifique *en sustancia* dado el amplio apoyo (413 votos contra 129) con que fue aprobada anoche en los Comunes.

(España, Walter Oppenheimer en [www.elpais.com](http://www.elpais.com) 15/II/2006)

- (9) Pues bien, planteada así la cuestión, el voto particular, sancionado ahora *en sustancia* por la sentencia del TC, responde que esa parte de Bildu sucede a Batasuna.

(España, José Luis Zubizarreta, in [www.diariovasco.com](http://www.diariovasco.com), 8/V/2011)

In these examples *en sustancia* is equivalent to the adverb ‘substantially, in depth’. Equally, *sustancia* is not a particle when it refers to the content of something contrasted to its form:

- (10) Sin embargo, al final no se cumplió este anuncio *ni en forma ni en sustancia*.

(España, M. Tejero in [www.diariodesevilla.es](http://www.diariodesevilla.es), 31/III/2015)

Another use allowing the construction to be labelled a discourse particle is that in which in *en sustancia* presents the subject of the discourse it appears in as the nuclear, basic, or most important idea of something indicated previously or subsequently:

- (11) La llamada piratería editorial, que es *en sustancia* la edición clandestina de libros con desconocimiento total de los derechos de autor, ha tomado especial auge en el país en los últimos tiempos.

(Colombia, [www.eltiempo.com](http://www.eltiempo.com), 5/I/1998)

This use requires further comment. At times the linguistic statements presented as compendium expressions or main expressions of what preceded do not sum up their antecedents in abbreviated form, but rather highlight a new set of information, presenting it as the key basic element of the extensive references:

- (12) Ese año cumplió don José sus setenta, la edad de la jubilación, y con tal motivo solicitamos de él una entrevista Sánchez Cantón, en tanto que Decano de Filosofía y Letras, y yo, como Rector de la Universidad donde Ortega había enseñado. He aquí, *en sustancia*, nuestro diálogo: “Aunque por tantas razones nos duela -dije yo-, comprendemos, don José, su apartamiento de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras [...]”.

(1976, Pedro Laín Entralgo, *Descargo de conciencia*, ap. CREA)

Given its generalizing nature in modern Spanish, *en sustancia* can reinforce the argument which precisely specifies what has been said, and thus can be paraphrased by *en realidad* or *en el fondo*:



- (13) Las medidas que España debe de adoptar para preparar su integración en las Comunidades Europeas no son, *en sustancia*, muy distintas de las que de manera autónoma debería tomar para tratar su propia crisis económica.  
(España, *El País*, 10/X/1980, ap. CREA)

It is possible to establish a nucleus of basic meaning that is maintained in the discourse particle *en sustancia*: concentrated in a basic notion that can be used to recapitulate extensive strata of information in discourse. Found mostly in preceding positions and with a previously defined information load, the argumentation scheme offered by *en sustancia* is shared by other languages. We specifically find other locutions that are related to the Spanish one. Thus, the locutions *em substância* from the Portuguese and *en substància* from Catalan show similarities to Spanish, but this connection is not limited to the Ibero Romance languages, as can be seen from the current use of *in substance* in English or *in sostanza* in Italian. This invites us to reassess history in search of a possible legacy left in the history of languages with examples such as those referenced from (5) to (7).

### 3. Diachronic evolution of Spanish

#### 3.1 Explanation of the linguistic change of *en sustancia*

In Spanish the word SUBSTANTIA is a learned word recorded from the 13th century by writer and cleric Gonzalo de Berceo (Corominas-Pascual, DCECH, s.v. *estar*). In the sense of ‘matter or essential part of something’ we find this form combined with the preposition *en* in a wide number of examples, particularly in the 15th century, and sometimes in specialized form in treatises on medicine or philosophy, disciplines that refer to *sustancia* contrasted to *forma*, *cualidad* and similar:

- (14) [las aguas delos estancos enchartados] aunque parecen tenpladas en qualidad a primera vista: assi acaesce al ayre de ser enconado *en su sustancia*: maguer que non pequen en qualidad: y si por aventura dixerdes: como puede ser corrupto *en sustancia e non en qualidad*: y respondo que puede ser assi [At first glance the water of the ponds appears warm, because the air within is corrupt in substance and not in property]. (c. 1418, *Sevillana medicina*, ap. CORDE)
- (15) La mejor cañafistola es aquella que es graue en peso y pingüe *en sustancia*, y luziente y negra en color [The best of the plants called *cañafistola* is that which weighs a lot and is substantial, brilliant and black]. (1515, Alfonso Rodríguez de Tudela, *Traducción del Compendio de boticarios*, ap. CORDE)

In the 15th century three specialist uses of the syntagm *en sustancia* can be distinguished. Firstly, the noun itself (outside and inside a prepositional construction)

is often found in theological discourse, particularly in explanations of the material nature of divine beings and the dogma of the Trinity (three beings but one *en sustancia*) (16). Secondly, we identify numerous examples in texts offering technical explanations for issues relating to the production of medicines, treatment of plants with healing purposes or similar (17). It should be noted that in the 15th century this noun was rarely found outside these universes of discourse, so it can be clearly stated that the noun was traditionally found in the discourse of specific types of text in circulation in the Spanish Early Middle Ages.

- (16) Vn solo Dios en esençia, / tres personas *en sustançia* / separadas syn distançia / e juntas syn diferençia [A single God in essence, / three people in substance / separated by no distance / and together with no difference].

(1445, Gómez Manrique, *Poesías*, ap. CORDE)

- (17) E porque los postemas son malos por la conuersion de la materia dellos en substancia poçoñosa [Scars are bad because they transform into poisonous substance]. (1410, Velasco de Taranto, *Tratado de la epidemia*, ap. CORDE)

The third use identified in the 15th century is found in the works of a single author: Enrique de Villena (also known as Enrique de Aragón), a Spanish aristocrat who was the precursor of the movement reconsidering the classic works of the Italian Renaissance. He himself had translated *The Aeneid*, Cicero's Rhetorica, and *The Divine Comedy*. In the examples identified for *en sustancia* in his written production we find uses not to be found in other Romance works of the time: linked to a verbum dicendi, specializing in explaining or recapitulating discourses or texts mentioned previously... (18). In these uses within works which were of limited importance at the time, Enrique de Villena was copying a similar use to that of the syntagm *en sustancia* in the final stages of Medieval Latin (5, 6, 7):

- (18) a. E así congregados, proponga el rey, endereçandolas palabras al que este ofiçio encomendar quiere, diziéndole *en sustançia* por las mejores palabras que pudiere cómo ya sabe qu'el ofiçio de cortar ant'él está vacado por fulán [In the gathered presence of everyone, the King will address whoever wants to take on this task, telling them in substance as best possible that the post of carver is free]. (1423, Enrique de Villena, *Arte cisoria*, ap. CORDE)

- b. Bevid. etc. En estas palabras se contiene en sustancia los argumentos por los cuales se puede judgar cuánta serenidad ha obtenido el que las virtudes proseguía en su entendimiento [In the words *Bevid...* are in substance the reasons to understand the good fortune obtained by whoever follows the virtues]. (1427, Enrique de Villena, *Traducción y glosas de la Eneida*, ap. CORDE)

- c. E por eso el capitán Androgeo, como dize el texto, con amigables palabras, es a saber pacíficas, les persuadía la vastaçion de la çibdat *en substancia* diciendo aquexarse de invadir la çibdat [This is the reason why captain Androgeus, according to the text, with good words, convinced them to ransack the city, saying in substance that he was complaining about his invasion]. (1427, Enrique de Villena, *Traducción y glosas de la Eneida*, ap. CORDE)

Villena, a good Latinist, added to the Spanish text a resource he had become acquainted with in his Latin readings. This use also appears in 16th- and 17th-century neo Latin. These two centuries were a crucial period for this discourse particle. It ceased to be a learned word or expression restricted to the fields of medicine and theology – as it had been in the 15th century – and spread to the Romance language. A cosmographer, fluent in Latin, used it in his historiographic work (19), and it also frequently appeared from the mid 16th century in administrative or jurisprudence texts, as we see in the proceedings of a legal process of (20). By the end of that century the expression *en sustancia* was well established in learned praise poetry (21) and in the 17th in chronicles and historiographical writing (22). Cases such as those below show how it operated as a discourse particle, particularly in metalinguistic contexts for explaining, reformulating and abbreviating definitions, one's own words or those of others, parts of a discourse, written texts:

- (19) fué asentado con el rey don Juan nuestro sobrino una capitulación que el dicho nuestro capitán general perseguía. La qual es *en sustancia* que el dicho nuestro capitán en la enpresa que proseguía contra los dichos... [with my nephew the king don Juan I settled an agreement, as the general captain wanted. This agreement is, in substance, that this captain would continue...]. (1491–1516, Alonso de Santa Cruz, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*)
- (20) Preguntado si se acuerda haber depuesto en este Santo oficio algunas cosas tocantes á la fee contra alguna persona, dixo que sí y refirió vocalmente *en sustancia* todo lo contenido en esta testificación contra Pedro Charte [He was asked if he had presented to the tribunal of the Inquisition any matter regarding the matter of faith of another, he said yes, and orally presented in substance what he had testified against Pedro Charte]. (1572, *Proceso de Pedro de Ocharte*, México)
- (21) Manifestóles con gentil crianza / Sus trazas, sus intentos y cuidados; / Y las palabras del razonamiento / *en sustancia* son estas que yo cuento [Very politely he told them his plans and concerns, and the words of what he said are in substance those which I will now refer]. (1589, Juan de Castellanos, *Elegías de varones ilustres de Indias*)

- (22) A estos respondió muy a lo largo, pero *en substancia* fue que aceptaba ser Alcayde de Fuende-Ravía [His answer to them was extensive, but in substance he said he accepted the post of mayor of Fuenterrabía].  
(1639, José Pellicer, *Avisos*)

Therefore, from the 16th century the noun *sustancia* within the expression *en sustancia*, appears to be well established and with no distinguishable transition phase as a discourse particle. It was first applied to metalinguistic matters, and then from the 18th century on clearly applied to metadiscourse matters, and so to events occurring in reality, having broken the previous necessary association to metadiscourse:

- (23) No fue largo el paso / pero bonito. *En sustancia*, / entró esta niña con sorna [The scene was not long. In essence, this girl came in gracefully].  
(1773, Ramón de la Cruz, *Las escofieteras*)

Its lexicographical appearance as a proper lemma suggests that in the 18th century the syntagm *en sustancia* was already considered an independent element, and not just the sum of its parts. This is clear in the first dictionary of the Real Academia Española, known as *Diccionario de Autoridades*, which as early as 1739 mentioned *substancia* as a term characteristic of Philosophy (as stated in the definition) and includes the sublemma with a different meaning in *en substancia*:

- (24) SUBSTANCIA. Term. Philosophico. La entidad, o essencia, que subsiste, ò existe por sí. Es voz puramente Latina.  
[...]  
*En substancia*. Modo adverbial, que vale sumariamente, en compendio, ù extracto.

The process of evolution for IN SUBSTANTIA shows the permanent focus of linguistic changes brought about by Latin and Romance contact in the Middle Ages. The linguistic model of expositive Latin (of Theology and Jurisprudence), indubitably encouraged transfers between similar discourse traditions in different languages. The Medieval Latin expression examined here, and initially limited to non-Romance discourse traditions, overcame this exclusive written linguistic barrier which took the original Latin model as a starting point. From Romance it spread to other textual models, causing the initial conceptual profile to disappear. This explains why the chronology, meaning, and use of the expression in Spanish are similar to those of other languages which also took the particle directly from late Latin. This is the case of the Portuguese language, which provides examples from the 17th century on:

- (25) [...] enquanto este habitual pecado se não remediasse, todas as almas dos portugueses deste Estado iam e haviam de ir para o inferno. Propus finalmente o remédio, que veio a ser *em substância* as mesmas resoluções da nossa resposta [as this sin was not resolved, the souls of the Portuguese were to go to hell. The remedy was finally proposed and it consisted in substance of the same decisions of our response]. (1626–1692, Padre Antonio Vieira, *Cartas*)

Thus, we see that modal circumstantial complements become routine in discourse (understanding them as *conventionalized uses of form-meaning pairings*, Gast / Van der Auwera 2012) and go from one language to another. In this case it seems opportune to insist on the concepts of *elaboration* and *discourse tradition* as channels for the change, dominating both cause and documentation (in the case of the latter at least when referring to the text locations of early examples). This is why I believe it is justified to demand that the conceptual *locus* of appearance of a marker be taken into account. If these markers result from the dialogic interaction giving rise to discourse uses, their inferences place them in communicative immediacy. However, where markers are not the result of interaction or spreading from below, but rather have arrived in texts from above, these can be placed in the conceptual *locus* of communicative distance. The innovation of the expression, its purely Latin origin, explains the repeated appearance of the form *en sustancia* in the 16th–17th centuries, reinforced by other abbreviating elements which help clarify its meaning. Thus, in (26) the adverb *brevemente* is added and in (27) the syntagm *en sentencia* ('en suma') is added:

- (26) Bramona, en lenguaje de tahures, lo mismo es que, en la nuestra, desgarrros, bravatas, desafueros contra Dios y contra el prójimo, tomar el cielo con las manos, maldecirse a sí mismos y otras cosas semejantes. Esto es, *brevemente en sustancia*, porque decirlos en el modo sería nunca acabar.

(1603, Francisco de Luque Fajardo,

*Fiel desengaño contra la ociosidad y los juegos*)

- (27) Yo hube en mi poder algunas de ellas [las cartas] [...] y las traje conmigo harto tiempo para aprovechar, e de los curiosos vocablos y maneras de hablar que contenian en su lengua. *En sustancia y sentencia* me acuerdo que entre otras muchas cosas decían estas palabras.

(1604, Fray Jerónimo Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*)

One of these reinforcing variants is taken from Latin itself and its history continues up to the present day. Although seldom documented, the variation *en suma y sustancia* is still found in an inverted form, *en sustancia y suma* (even rarer), both cases of Latin formulae which find cognates in other European languages (Eng. *sum and substance*):

- (28) y allí por medio de su Chanciller leyeron la espuesta, la qual abraçaua *en suma y sustancia* lo que arriba tengo puesto de la ayuda y socorro contra Francia.  
(1614, Fray Prudencio de Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y hechos del emperador Carlos V*)
- (29) Lo que le dijo el co-conspirador #2 a la CONCACAF, *en suma y sustancia*, fue que Traffic podría replicar el éxito comercial y deportivo que había tenido con la Copa América y hacer de la Copa de Oro un éxito similar.  
(Paraguay, Armando Rivarola, en [www.abc.com.py](http://www.abc.com.py) 24/VI/2015)

#### 4. Conclusions

The theory of grammaticalization has allowed us to describe and understand the gradual transition processes which lead lexical forms to acquire grammatical and abstract meanings, but the circumstances in which the activity of speech takes place have not always been taken into account. Overcoming this apparent *barrier* in the theory of grammaticalization has led it to be associated with other perspectives which take into consideration the socio-historical conditioning factors of the linguistic statements driving the dissemination of the change. The studies carried out confirm that the processes of idiomatic elaboration can lead to the enrichment, consolidation and purification of the processes for discourse construction. Such enrichment benefits fully from the resources of the mother language: there are elements which move away from the texts and functions in which they occurred, acquiring new discourse functions through grammaticalization. This also borrows from the resources of Medieval Latin language, in this case creating the discourse particle tailored to the mother language.

As a discourse particle, the evolution described for *en sustancia* shows how a learned form brought directly from Latin has two already pre-existing meanings in Spanish (one more specific and another more abstract and derived from the first). This is not a case of one evolving from the other, as the initial changes occur outside conventional inferences.

We cannot assume that all the markers emanating from communicative distance are the result of loans, as there are also grammaticalizations of elements characteristic of elaborated, restricted, or highly technical varieties. It appears that processes of idiomatic elaboration tend to lead to enriching, purifying, and consolidating the procedures for discourse construction. For this reason we resort to resources from the language itself which go beyond the texts in which they were used and over time acquire discourse functions (vernacular elaboration). Alternatively, a marker is created to fit what exists in the other languages it is in contact with (elaboration through contact), as is the case of Medieval Latin which is clearly the base of the discourse particle *en sustancia*.

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