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GRAMMATICALIZATION, (INTER)SUBJECTIFICATION,
AND SEQUENCING OF ACTIONS:
THE ESTONIAN EPISTEMIC (QUESTION) PARTICLE *ega*

Abstract. The paper studies the semantic-pragmatic and syntactic development of the negation verb/word *ei* + the adverb *kaas* 'together, also' into an epistemic marker and particle *ega*. *Ega* has been described as a coordinating conjunction, a marker of negation and a question word in Estonian grammars and we will show how these diverse usages come together on a timeline from the earliest written sources to present-day conversation. *Ega* has first been grammaticalized into a conjunction and then into an emphatic epistemic marker indicating speaker certainty as well as opposition with prior discourse. It is now being reanalyzed as a question word in cases where the negative proposition concerns matters that belong to the interlocutor's area of competence. The study shows that interactional sequencing of actions may provide a crucial clue for the process of (inter)subjectification. It also proposes a novel cline of grammaticalization for a question word, and thus illustrates the benefits of combining the methods of conversation analysis and historical linguistics.

Keywords: Estonian, grammaticalization, epistemic marker, (inter)subjectification, conversational sequence, negation, question word.

Introduction

A classical definition of grammaticalization says that it is an "evolution whereby linguistic units lose in semantic complexity, pragmatic significance, syntactic freedom, and phonetic substance respectively" (Heine, Reh 1984 : 15). Grammaticalization is thus seen as a complex of related or parallel processes, describable as continua of usage patterns where there is a more lexical item on one end and a more grammatical item on the other. The probably most often cited example of the grammaticalization process is the development of *be going to* into *gonna* as a marker of prospective temporality in English. Being a combination of the progressive form of the verb *go* (which had possibly developed a purposive meaning on its own) and the subordinator *to* introducing a purposive clause, *be going to* came to function as an auxiliary marking future tense (Traugott 1994 : 1481). Along similar lines, the Estonian word combination *ei* 'negation verb/word' and the adverb *kaas* 'together, also' has shortened and assimilated into *ega* through the recorded

history of Estonian (Metslang, Habicht, Pajusalu 2011; Metslang, Pajusalu, Habicht 2015 : 291–292). It has undergone semantic bleaching and pragmatic change, and acquired a new syntactic function as an epistemic particle/adverb. There has been a lot of controversy over the years in regard to whether a grammaticalization process may result in a discourse marker or a pragmatic particle, and the special volume by Degand and Simon-Vandenberg (2011) is a perfect summary of the state of the art. The editors conclude that all the contributors agree that grammaticalization is the best possible explanation for the development of pragmatic particles, on the condition that grammar is understood in a wider sense, as appropriate for spoken discourse (Degand, Simon-Vandenberg 2011 : 293). In this paper we will provide new evidence of yet another developmental path of a particle.

When it comes to the functions of *ega*, they seem to be varied at first glance (Examples (1)–(4)), and only some of them have been registered in dictionaries and grammars (EKS 2 : 246–247; ÕS 118; Erelt, Kasik, Metslang, Rajandi, Ross, Saari, Tael, Vare 1995). The transcription and glossing conventions of the examples can be found at the end of the article. The focus item *ega* is notoriously difficult to translate into English, especially because of its multi-layered functioning in Estonian, and variable counterparts, if any, in English (with their own unsuitable connotations). We have nevertheless tried to cater the needs of a non-native reader, providing a best translation on a case-by-case basis.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| (1) Coordinating conjunction | <i>ei ole hea ega paha</i>
NEG be good nor bad
'neither good nor bad' |
| (2) Intensifying conjunction | <i>ta ei tulnud ega tulnud</i>
she NEG come-PPT NEG.too come-PPT
'It took a long time for her to come' |
| (3) Negative connector | <i>ma räägin sinuga, ega ma ahjuga ei räägi</i>
I talk-1SG you-COM EPI I stove-COM NEG talk
'I'm talking to you, not to the stove' |
| (4) Question word | <i>ega sa malet mängida ei oska</i>
EPI/Q you chess-PRT play-INF NEG can
'You don't play chess, do you?' |

The first two usages clearly reflect the original functions of the negation word and the additive adverb. The third reflects negation and establishes connection with prior discourse (EKS 2 : 246), but the fourth appears to have developed quite far from the others. The historical development of the occurrence in (4), characterized as a question word in grammars, will be the focus of our analysis. However, in order to describe the entire process of semantic-pragmatic development, it is important to note that there are other usages in present-day Estonian that have occasionally been characterized as emphatic (EKS 2 : 247). The following examples illustrating these patterns come from the spoken language data used for the current study.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| (5) Epistemic particle | <i>ega ma mingi Mäkaiver ei ole</i>
EPI I some NAME NEG be
'I'm definitely not a MacGyver' |
|------------------------|--|

- (6) Adversative particle *no ega seda saab ainult*
 but EPI it.PRT can-3SG only
 '[C o n t r a r y t o w h a t y o u j u s t c l a i m e d]'
 üks kord teha
 one time do-INF
 'it can only be done once'

In general, the function of *ega* involves negation, coordination, as well as some kind of reinforcement of the proposition. The usages range from less grammatical (1–3), to more functional, or grammaticalized ones (4–6). Our aim is to show how they all come together on a timeline from the earliest written sources to present-day conversation, according to the principles of grammaticalization and the related process of (inter)subjectification. In this tradition, subjectification designates a process whereby "meanings become increasingly based in the speaker's subjective belief state/attitude towards what the speaker is talking about" (Traugott 1989 : 35; 1995 : 31), while inter-subjectification implies "the explicit expression of the speaker/writer's attention to the 'self' of the addressee/reader" (Traugott 2003 : 128). This includes epistemic meaning, which is crucial for our analysis.

Grammaticalization theory deals with the relationship between the more and less fixed in language, highlighting the tension between the relatively unconstrained lexical structure and the more constrained syntactic, morphosyntactic, and morphological structure in a language (Hopper, Traugott 1993 : 1–2). It demonstrates how grammatical forms arise by exposing minute semantic changes in local contexts during the development of a content item into a more fixed function item. Grammaticalization is an inherently historical process but it need not always be studied from a diachronic "source and pathway" perspective. As a syntactic and discourse-pragmatic phenomenon, it can also be described from the point of view of fluid patterns of language use at a synchronically segmented moment in time (Lehmann 1985; Traugott, Heine 1991 : 1). Furthermore, it is quite difficult to trace informal language patterns diachronically, because this type of data is not available in traditional written sources. Even though some interactional matters have been documented in historical data (Brinton 1996 : 36–38), recorded conversations provide considerably more detail for appropriate analysis. The current study therefore combines synchronic and diachronic data. The first one enables full access to the sequential and contextual issues of language production, while the second one provides the necessary historical depth to arguments about the process of grammaticalization. At least in the case of *ega*, historical data leaves us with a puzzle that the synchronic data helps to solve. We will thus be arguing for the benefits of combining different types of data and methods.

Crucially, the historical development of the Estonian *ega* enables us to suggest a new cline of grammaticalization: negation verb/word + additive adverb develops into an epistemic particle and possibly into a question word. An earlier study on Cantonese has pointed out that negation can indeed be grammaticalized as a question marker through the A-not-A question pattern (Harris, Campbell 1995 : 295; Heine, Kuteva 2002 : 216–217). The current study discusses a different cline, where the questioned item is not repeated as in the A-not-A pattern. Furthermore, the components we will

be discussing are mainly clauses, not mere phrasal constituents. In contrast, the proposed cline involves the two original components first developing into a conjunction, then into a particle, and finally into a question word.

This process adheres to the general direction of development from a nonsubjective to a subjective and intersubjective meaning in grammaticalization, as outlined for several English and Japanese cases by Traugott and Dasher (2002 : 34–40). In the process of subjectification, items such as *I think* or *actually* have started to express the speaker's epistemic stance. Likewise, items that mark speaker orientation to discourse structure, such as *in fact* and *well*, have undergone subjectification (Cuyckens, Davidse, Vandelanotte 2010 : 11). In a similar manner, *ega* has developed into a subjective marker of speaker certainty and a marker of opposing prior discourse or some underlying assumption, thus structuring the discourse. It now seems to be developing into a question word asking for recipient's confirmation, thus undergoing intersubjectification. In the latter use, *ega* marks a high degree of certainty regarding the recipient's coming answer, thereby displaying a clear intersubjective profile. The development of *ega* also conforms to other paths of semantic change. It has moved from truth-conditional to non-truth-conditional usage, from content to procedural meaning, and from reflecting scope over proposition to reflecting scope over discourse (Traugott, Dasher 2002 : 40). It thus matches previous findings on grammaticalization and related paths of semantic development, such as subjectification, which is an independent process that often interacts with grammaticalization, and intersubjectification that does so less often (Traugott 2010 : 38, 61). At the same time, our findings do not match any of the hitherto reported clines of grammaticalization. In this paper we will combine qualitative and quantitative methods to reveal the development of *ega* throughout its documented history. We will start by introducing the sources of our data.

The data

The historical data for the study come from the corpus of Old Literary Estonian, www.murre.ut.ee/vakkur/Korpused (containing 1,550,802 words), and the corpus of Literary Estonian (www.cl.ut.ee/korpused) excerpted in 1890 (384,000 words), 1930 (369,000 words), 1960 (333,000 words), and 1990 (995,000 words). In addition, the Dialect Archive at the Institute of the Estonian Language has been checked for all the patterns. The Dialect Archive represents language use from the start of the systematic collection of dialect data in the 1920s and onwards and includes 5,250,000 lexicon cards. The codes used for the examples are OLE, LE, and DA, respectively.

The contemporary data come from two spoken language corpora. The first consists of naturally occurring telemarketing and everyday calls between family members, relatives, friends, and colleagues (henceforth, the AU corpus). There are about 103,000 words in the corpus. The other corpus is the publicly available Tartu corpus (henceforth TC), <http://www.cl.ut.ee/suuline/Korpus.php>, which is constantly growing. Excerpts are taken from a variety of settings, including face-to-face conversations. The version checked for the *ega*-patterns consisted of about 230,000 words. Additional data has been found on the internet, which is nowadays the largest collection of informal Estonian. Each contemporary example is provided with a code revealing its origin (AU, TC, NET respectively).

We have altogether 4068 cases of *ega* in our collection, among them 506 from contemporary spoken usage. Qualitative functional analysis will be used to reveal the different patterns throughout their historical development. The paper will start with the less grammatical patterns and gradually move to the more grammatical usage in questions, deploying conversation analytic methods to explain the development of the epistemic marker into a question word. Finally, quantitative analysis will be presented to illustrate the distribution of the patterns across time.

The negation word *ep/eb/ei* and the adverb *kaas/kahs/kahn/kz* in the earliest sources

The earliest written sources of Estonian are scarce and dialectally varied. Estonian spoken in the South-Eastern territories has been considerably different from the language spoken elsewhere. The latter constituted the main basis of the present-day standard language, while South Estonian has periodically maintained its own regional standard. Importantly for our argument, in the South East the historical negation word has been recorded as *ei*, while in other areas it has been *eb/ep*, varying from author to author. All three are non-inflected particles and the variant *ei* is now the standard. The *i* in it has been associated with the old Baltic-Finnic *ja/jä*-suffix which to this day derives person nouns from verbs (Häkkinen 2004 : 108–109). In earlier history negation had actually functioned as a verb taking person and number endings, but only a few instances of inflected forms have been recorded in the earliest Estonian written texts from the 16th century, e.g. *en* 'NEG:1SG', *emme* 'NEG:1PL', *ewat* 'NEG:3PL', with the third person singular *eb/ep* being the unmarked form. The *b/p* has historically been connected to the present participle *pa/pä* (EEW I 170; SSA 1992 : 99). This variability in negation word usage is also relevant for the development of *ega* studied in the current paper (see Examples 7–11). Let us start by looking at an example of the early use of the negation particle in the 17th century, in the sermons by Georg Müller (the particle developed from the verb **e-pä*, *e-* negation verb stem + *pA* present participle) (Laanest 1982 : 242–243), marked in bold.

- (7) *Sepr:* *N. pidda meije igka aijal haed nouw*
 therefore N. must we all time-ADS good-PRT advice.PRT
 'Therefore, N., we always have to seek'
nente Iumala kartiade Inimeste iures
 these-GEN God-GEN afraid-PL.GEN people-PL.GEN at
 'good advice from people reverent to God.'
otzima, ke sedda eb mitte te, ninck eb taha
 look.for-SUP who it.PRT NEG not do and NEG want
 'Those who don't do that and don't want to'
kz teha, nedtsamat murretzewat hend surnux,
 too do.INF they worry-3PL themselves-PRT death-TRA
 'do it e i t h e r, they will worry to death'
ninck nerriwat oma heñese Südda (OLE 1605-Myller)
 and chew-3PL own.GEN selves.GEN heart
 'and chew upon their own hearts'

We can also see our other target word *kz* in the above example, marking additivity. *Kaas/kz* (*kahn* in the South-East, as recorded during the 17th century; also recorded as *kahs* according to an alternative German-inspired orthography), is used as a postposition and an adverb. Its postpositional use is considerably more frequent and has later developed into the comitative case suffix *-ga* (Alvre 1997; Habicht 2000). Semantically, *kaas/kahs/kahn/kz* marks comitativeness, togetherness and additivity already in the earliest sources, and is therefore translated as 'either' in the above example. Still separate in the 17th century, the combination of these two items, the negation word and the adverb, is already functioning as a coordinating conjunction.

Ega as a coordinating conjunction

A case of *ega* used as a coordinating conjunction in current usage was shown in Example (1). In contemporary language *ega* can combine identical parts of speech as well as negative clauses. Both patterns are already represented in the oldest fully preserved manuscript in Estonian, the sermons by Georg Müller held from 1600–1606. Characteristically to the documented processes of semantic change (Traugott 2010 : 31), our target item must have already developed a textual function from an earlier propositional one by that time. However, the conjunction back then is still coded as two words, the negation *eb* and the adverb *kaas/kz* (the latter being a shortening used by one particular author). Example (8) demonstrates a case where *eb kaas* is used as a coordinator between identical parts of speech.

- (8) *ninck eb laße hend sest mitte*
 and NEG let self-PRT this-ELT not
 'and does not let herself to be distracted from it'
erraheitoda, lebbi onne ehk willetzus,
 distract-INF through happiness.GEN (n)or distress
 '[the word of God], neither in happiness nor in distress'
eb kaas mitte lebbi hæ ninck kuria peiwa (OLE 1601-Myller)
 NEG too not through good.GEN and bad.GEN day.GEN
 'n o r¹ in good or bad days'

Some decades later, in the 1630s, the author of the first Estonian grammar Heinrich Stahl demonstrated the same phrasal and clausal patterns. Example (9) shows an instance with two negative clauses.

- (9) *Kus Jummal keicke kurja nouw ninck tachtmisse*
 when God all.GEN evil.GEN plan.GEN and intention.GEN
 'When God destroys and forbids all the evil'
errarickup/ ninck keelap/ kumbat meid ep
 destroy-3SG and forbid-3SG that-PL we-PRT NEG
 'plans and intentions that do not allow us'
lasckwat temma Nimmi põhitzeda/ epkaks temma
 allow-3PL he.GEN name celebrate-INF NEG.too he.GEN
 'to celebrate his name, n o r his'

¹ The English word *nor* seems to be the closest functional match of the negation word + 'too' in Estonian.

rickusse meite jure tulla (OLE 1632-Stahl)
 kingdom.GEN we.GEN to come.INF
 'kingdom to come to us'

In short, we can see that already in the earliest written sources of Estonian, the combination of the negation word and the adverb has consolidated into a discursive pattern where it has come to function as a coordinating conjunction. Crucially, Stahl uses an orthographic variant which combines the two words as one (Example (9)), suggesting some phonetic assimilation as well as a pragmatic consolidation of the item. However, it continues to vary phonologically throughout the ensuing centuries. For example, in the translation of the New Testament from 1715 even shorter versions appear involving the by then prevalent negation word *ei*. The variation in the orthography of the New Testament (1715) is illustrated in Examples (10)–(11).

(10) *Sest Ristia Johannes on tulnud/ ja ei sönud*
 because baptist John has come-PPT and NEG eat-PPT
 'Because John the Baptist came and he didn't eat'
Leiba/ ei ka jonud Wina (1715-UT)
 bread.PRT NEG too drink-PPT wine.PRT
 'bread, n o r [did he] drink wine'

(11) *Et teie ei anna ennast/ pea sinna ja tänna*
 that you NEG let self-PRT sometimes there and there
 'That you don't let yourself be distracted here'
keigotada ommast Melest/ eiga hirmotada/
 distract-INF self-ELT mind-ELT NEG.too scare-INF
 'and there in your mind, n o r to be scared'
ei mitte Waimo läbbi/ eiga Sanna läbbi/
 NEG not mind.GEN by NEG.too word.GEN by
 'neither in your mind, n o r by a word,'
eiga Ramato läbbi (OLE 1715-UT)
 NEG.too book.GEN by
 'n o r by a book'

The orthographic variant *eiga* shows evidence of a further phonological-phonetic assimilation of the item. The Bible translation also displays cases without the diphthong: *egga* (the double *gg* being another influence of the German orthography which marks vowel length in subsequent consonants). Two centuries later, during the first half of the 20th century, Estonian dialects still show variation involving diphthongs: *eiga*, *äiga*. In addition, such forms as *ega*, *egä*, *jega*, *äga*, *eka*, *õga*, and *õka* are recorded in the Dialect Archive. An example with *egä* follows (12).

(12) *et inime ei mõistnd elädä egä olla*
 that human NEG be.able-PPT live-INF NEG.too be.INF
 'that a human being could not live, n o r to be,'
egä arvata kedägi (DA)
 NEG.too think-INF nothing.PRT
 'n o r to think anything'

In addition, our earliest available records of spoken usage, the Dialect Archive, reveal the use of the conjunction in the intensifying doubling construction (shown in Example (13), contemporary case in Example (2) above). As this rather formulaic use is not relevant for our argument on the development of *ega*, it will not be discussed further in the current paper. Neither will it be counted in the quantitative summary in Table 1 below.

- (13) *ei saa ega saa tulema* (DA)
 NEG can NEG.too can come-SUP
 '[they] could never start off'

When it comes to contemporary Estonian, the item has consolidated as *ega* in the written standard as well as in the common spoken variety. This is witnessed in the comprehensive Estonian grammar, as shown in Example (14).

- (14) *Ei lähe ilmad veel niipea soojemaks ega*
 NEG become weather-PL still soon warmer-TRA NEG.too
 'The weather will not become warmer for a while, n o r'
hakka päike kõrgemalt käima (Erelt, Kasik, Metslang, Rajandi,
 start Sun higher go-SUP Ross, Saari, Tael, Vare 1995 : 216)
 'will the Sun start going higher.'

Here we see *ega* occurring between two negative clauses, while there is no negation marker apart from *ega* in the second clause. In other words, *ega* has in this case preserved its original component meaning of negative along with the additive component. However, there are no examples of the above multi-clausal pattern in the spoken corpora, not even in the formal registers of spoken usage. Thus, the coordination of clauses with *ega* without expressing negation in the second clause, seems to be restricted to the written registers of Estonian. The above instance (Example (14)) sounds downright poetic. In spoken usage the negation word would be used in both clauses.

As was already the case in the early sources, *ega* is still used as a conjunction between two identical parts of speech within a clause, and currently forms a compound coordinating conjunction together with the negation word *ei* (Erelt, Kasik, Metslang, Rajandi, Ross, Saari, Tael, Vare 1995 : 109, 165, 278). The *ei* and *ega* appear in different parts of the clause with *ei* standing in front of the first negated element and *ega* preceding the last one. This pattern is used both in the written and spoken varieties. An example of the latter is presented in (15).

- (15) *temal on paha et ta pole ei² laps*
 he-ADS be.3SG bad that he NEG-be NEG child
 'The bad thing with him is that he is neither'
ega täiskasvanu (AU)
 NEG.too grown-up
 'a child n o r a grown-up'

The above historical overview shows how, starting around the beginning of the 17th century, the original word combination *eb/ep/ei + kaas/kahs/kahn/kz* has developed into a coordinating conjunction *ega*. As could already be seen in the earliest written sources, *ega* is either used between two nega-

² However, *ei* is optional in the case of coordinated nouns and could also have been omitted in this example.

tive clauses or as the coordinator of identical parts of speech in a negative clause. It has thus acquired a new syntactic function of a conjunction and accordingly settled down in the clause-initial position. Instead of negating the clause and modifying it as an adverb in the former word combination, *ega* displays a new grammatical function. Instead of relative syntactic freedom, the position is now fixed. This represents a well-known component process of grammaticalization — loss of syntactic freedom. Another one, phonological assimilation and loss, can be summarized as follows:

eb/ep/ei + kaas/kahs/kahn/kz > epkahs/eikahs > eiga > ega

The odd step from the negation word *ep* to *ei* can be explained with the variation of negative forms in different parts of the country. While earlier writers preferred *eb* or *ep*, *ei* ended up as the most common form by the second half of the 19th century.

In the patterns we have seen, *ega* has nevertheless preserved both the negative and the additive meaning. It functions in the truth-conditional sphere, coordinating negated clauses or identical parts of speech. Only on a limited scale, after a negated clause, no other negation needs to be present besides *ega* for the following clause to have a negative meaning (Example (14)).³ *Ega* has thus preserved its component meanings in the coordinating function but it has become a procedural item instead of a content item, in a historical process that has been described for English and Japanese by Traugott and Dasher (2002 : 40). However, coordination is just the first stage in the development of *ega*.

Ega as an adversative conjunction

During the first half of the 19th century it becomes more common to use *ega* as a conjunction with an adversative connotation. It changes its scope from proposition to discourse and starts to display a non-truth-conditional meaning, in terms of Traugott, Dasher (2002 : 40). This pattern is most pronounced when the prior clause is positive and *ega* connects it to the subsequent negative clause — a pattern that we have not yet discussed. Example (16) shows an early 19th-century example, where the author is mounting evidence of exceptional solidarity. *Ega* here attests to the implicit assumption that people generally gossip and denies it, at the same time marking that the following argument is added to the previous ones as a further proof of communal solidarity. The first two clauses are positive and *ega* adds a negative one. In this case, it is no longer possible to translate *ega* into English in a straightforward manner (the closest counterpart could be 'obviously', 'in fact', 'actually', or 'contrary to expectation' + 'in addition').

- (16) *mis önneks juhtus ühhele,*
 what happiness-TRA happen-IMF.3SG one-ALL
 'The happiness that fell on one of them'
rõmustas keiki, ja mis ühhe peäle
 make.happy-IMF.3SG everybody-PRT and what one.GEN on
 'made everybody happy and what happened to one'

³ Within the formulaic genres of proverbs and headlines, as well as some dialects, *ega* can also mark negation without any other explicit negation marker in the clause.

langes, panni teisi ka murretsema
 fall-IMF.3SG put-IMF.3SG others-PRT too worry-SUP
 'of them made others worry too,'
egga olnud seäl ühhegi suust kuulda,
 EPI be-PPT there no.one.GEN mouth-ELT hear-INF
 'I n f a c t, nobody was heard to say anything'
mis teisi wois teotada (OLE 1817-Holtz)
 that others-PRT can-IMF.3SG harm-INF
 'that could harm the others'

A similar use occurs in the Dialect Archive, where the opposition concerns the recipient's assumed level of intelligence. The speaker counters the assumption of stupidity with the help of *ega*, which enhances the negation as well as expresses 'contrary to what you imply'.

- (17) *sa ise suad arvo, egä sa loll et õle* (DA)
 you self understand-3SG EPI you stupid NEG be
 'You'll understand, o b v i o u s l y you're not stupid.'

The adversative pattern can be outlined in all its details in contemporary data. In Example (18), *ega* implies contrast with the assumptions established in the immediately prior discourse: the one who listens is expected to understand. We can thus see the discourse basis for the assumption that is contradicted in the *ega*-initiated clause.

- (18) *ja mina siis sõrm suus siis kuulasin*
 and I then finger mouth-INS then listen-IMF-1SG
 'And I listened to the stories'
neid jutte. aga ega ma ei
 these-PRT story-PL.PRT but EPI I NEG
 'attentively but a c t u a l l y I didn't'
saand eriti aru, (TC)
 understand-PPT much sense
 understand much'

Looking at conversational usage, it becomes evident that *ega* is used dialogically to counter the assumptions by others. Extract (19) comes from a phone call where the caller wants to obtain extra keys to an apartment block, obviously assuming that there are keys available. The current speaker counters this assumption by claiming that there are only three keys. *Ega* initiates a unit that explicitly states that there are no more keys, implying that the upcoming unit is 'in contrast to what you just assumed'.

- (19) *üks on minu käes, üks on Rumba — mul*
 one be:3SG I-GEN hand:INS one be:3SG NAME.GEN I-ADS
 'I have one, Rumba has one —, I have'
kolm võtit on, ega neid rohkem ei ole. (AU)
 three key-PRT be:3SG EPI they-PRT more NEG be
 'only three keys, i n f a c t I don't have more'

The speaker starts his turn by accounting for the existing keys and then establishes in the ensuing clause that there are no more than three keys. The first clause is positive and the second one is a rephrase or expansion

of the same proposition in a negative form. In cases like this, the *ega*-initiated clause connects to what has just been said but reverses the polarity of the claim, now in an enhanced form. *Ega* expresses the speaker's relatively high level of commitment to the truth of the proposition that has already been substantiated in the prior (positive) clause. It can be translated as 'in fact, as we know, clearly, for sure'. The Estonian-English dictionary (Saagpakk 1982) offers 'surely not', 'certainly not', 'indeed not' as its counterparts in English. In other words, *ega* underlines the speaker's epistemic certainty.

A similar example occurs in a telemarketing call (20) where the telemarketer has just put forward a special offer for a newspaper subscription, declaring it to be cheap. The potential client, however, states the contrary:

- (20) *kuuskend viis krooni kuumaks jah (.) jah (.)*
 sixty five kroon.PRT monthly.price yeah yeah
 'Sixty five kroons per month, yeah, yeah'
nojah ja mui- (eks) muidugi inda küll
 well and of- of.course price.PRT much
 'Well, of course that's quite a price'
ega ega odav ta ei ole ega (AU)
 EPI EPI cheap it NEG be EGA
 'c l e a r l y it is not cheap'

Even in this example, *ega* is used both to express opposition to the telemarketer's prior claim and to mark the speaker's enhanced epistemic certainty after the evidence is laid out. To summarize the current section, we can see the following structures emerging with the clause-combining *ega*:

positive statement		negative rephrasing/expansion
'Everyone was happy'	<i>ega</i>	'nobody gossiped'
'You understand'	<i>ega</i>	'you are not stupid'
'I listened to the stories'	<i>ega</i>	'I didn't understand'
'I have only three keys'	<i>ega</i>	'I don't have more'
'The price is high'	<i>ega</i>	'it is not cheap'

In all of the cases, *ega* marks enhanced certainty, which often relies on the content of the just prior clause in which a related claim has been made. In conversation, the necessity of epistemic enhancement can be triggered by immediate interactional or interpersonal needs. For instance, the speaker in Example (19) talks about the facts that he as the condo chairman has access to, and the caller obviously does not. With the help of *ega* he reinforces his superior knowledge. The potential newspaper subscriber in Example (20) declares the offer expensive, establishing this as a personal but firm assessment in contrast to what the telemarketer said. In the connective pattern described in the current section it is thus increasingly clear that *ega* is developing semantically further from its origins, displaying the meanings of opposition and epistemic certainty. It establishes the current speaker as an epistemic authority on the matter and expresses an asymmetrical epistemic stance between the speakers, which is an inherent component of the adversative meaning. In fact, adversative conjunctions, at least in English, regularly operate with both epistemic and conversational conflicts (Sweetser 1990 : 100–111). The negative *ega*-initiated clause appeals to the interlocutor's

understanding of the circumstances that go against some of his prior explicit or implied assumption.

Ega displays a distinct capacity to address other participants' claims and assumptions, being responsive. In this respect it is interesting to notice that Finnish as well as the Scandinavian languages (Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian) feature a pattern of initial clausal negation, which occurs in responsive, additive and interrogative actions, and where the negation word similarly displays contrastive as well as epistemic enhancement functions (J. Lindström 2007). In this pattern the negation word is used clause-initially, removed from its neutral adverbial position. Lindström argues that this is a Circum-Baltic areal feature. An example from Swedish looks as follows:

- (21) *Inte tänker han sälja bilen i vår*
NEG thinks he sell car.the in spring
'Clearly / I'm sure, he is not going to sell the car this spring'
(Lindström 2007 : 32–33)

The neutral word order would be *Han tänker inte sälja bilen i vår*, while in the above case negation is topicalized and implies contradiction as well as reassurance. The pragmatic functions of *ega* coincide with the initial clausal negation patterns in these areally close languages, suggesting contact as a possible factor in its historical development.

Whatever the motivation, in the adversative function *ega* is becoming closely attached to the upcoming clause and increasingly loosely attached to the prior one. It is developing into a clause-initial particle. The prior clause no longer has to be in the negative form and the conjoined clauses do not have to be as tightly connected as we saw in the historical elliptical cases in (8–9). At the same time, negation is obligatory in the upcoming clause (as was evident in Examples (17)–(20)), which shows that (a) *ega* is more particle-like in this pattern and (b) it does not unambiguously carry the meaning of negation any more. It can be assumed that the epistemic-adversative meaning is also present in some instances with the negative clause preceding the *ega*-clause, but a preceding positive clause makes the new semantic features especially clear, which is why the current section focused on the latter. We will now look at some instances where *ega* has clearly become an initial particle, occurring even at the very beginning of conversational turns.

Ega as an epistemic-adversative particle/adverb

In the previous section, *ega* was shown to function as a conjunction between two clauses, retaining its original additive meaning component. In the current section we will discuss an altogether new syntactic deployment. Namely, via strengthening its epistemic-adversative connotation *ega* has started to occur in clause and turn-initial positions. This usage shows that *ega* now functions as a particle or an adverb that modifies the subsequent clause (even though it does not take any of the default syntactic positions of an adverb). The particle/adverb pattern develops in parallel to the adversative conjunction, with first clear cases established at the beginning of the 18th century. The initial *ega* in Example (22) from this period underlines the speaker's epistemic certainty and gives the statement an oppositional stance.

- (22) *Egga sa pea omma Pä jures wandma* (OLE 1715-UT)
 EPI you must own.GEN head.GEN on swear-SUP
 'O b v i o u s l y you don't have to swear on your head'

In the Dialect Archive there are examples that suggest a similar epistemic-adversative meaning. Even though discourse context is not recorded in the archive, it seems that these epistemically reinforced negative clauses could have been used to oppose the (presumed) assumptions by the interviewer. An example is shown in (23).

- (23) *ega sa ei saand kodu ega toas istuda* (DA)
 EPI you NEG can-PPT home.INS nor room-INS sit-INF
 'O b v i o u s l y you couldn't sit at home or indoors'

Similarly to cases described in the previous section, *ega* here functions as an epistemic word indicating the speaker's high degree of confidence in what follows, which is at the same time in opposition to some expressed or assumed knowing by the recipient (that you could just sit at home).

In contemporary conversational data turn-initial usage abounds. Example (24) comes from a telemarketing call, where after hearing about a special offer the client (K) states that she wants to think it over (in lines 1–2). The telemarketer's (M) subsequent turn starts with *ega*, even though there is no prior clause that *ega* would connect to as a coordinating conjunction. *Ega* here functions as a clause-initial particle/adverb and, characteristically, the emerging clause refutes the implicit assumption by the client that she has to make up her mind right away.

- (24) 1 K: *no seda peab mõtlem veel.(0.2) muidugi*
 NO it.PRT must-3SG think-SUP still of.course
 'We have to think about it'
 2 *see ind on jah (.) ahvatlev.*
 the price be.3SG yeah attractive
 'The price is attractive, of course'
 3 M: *ega ma täna ei tahagi kohe te*
 EPI I today NEG want-GI at.once you.PL.GEN
 'I n f a c t I don't want'
 4 *te vastust saada. (AU)*
 you.PL.GEN answer-PRT get-INF
 'your answer today'

In conversational usage the *ega*-initiated clause thus challenges something that has been assumed by the prior speaker. In lines 1–2 the client implicitly conveys an assumption about the timing of the required decision and the telemarketer challenges that. Example (25) shows a case where the challenge is even more explicit. Prior to the excerpt, V has stated that her mobile phone is broken. Now M suggests that V can fix the problem with some wires (line 2). This is emphatically challenged by V in an *ega*-enhanced negative clause.

- (25) 1 V: *kuidas.*
 how
 'How [do I repair the mobile phone]?'

- 2 M: *mis kuidas juhtmetega.*
 what how wire-PL-COM
 'What do you mean by "how"? With the wires'
 3 V: <@ mhh *ega ma mingi Mäkaiver ei ole.* @> (TC)
 EPI I some NAME NEG be
 'F o r s u r e, I'm not a MacGyver'

At this point, the only remnant of the original meaning of the item *ega* seems to be that it is associated with negation (note the negative form of the upcoming clause in Example (25)), while the additive-connective meaning has bleached. In fact, the upcoming clause does not even have to be in the negative. The adversative epistemic *ega* can likewise initiate positive clauses. Importantly, this does not render the upcoming clause a negative polarity, as is demonstrated in the following excerpt (26). The talk here concerns regulating heat levels in an apartment block. In lines (1–3) speaker E suggests a person who could take on the job. Speaker T, however, subsequently refutes E's assumption that the heat can be regulated repeatedly. His counterargument in line 5 is in a positive form but still initiated by *ega*.

- (26) 1 E: *no vat siis ee b Püss oli nagu nõus.*
 NO VAT then NAME be-IMF.3SG like agreement-INS
 'Yeah, Püss Eero agreed to start'
 2 *see v Eero, (.).hh e et tema võib seda reguleerimist ise*
 this NAME that he may-3SG this.PRT regulation-PRT self
 'regulating it himself'
 3 *teha ku talle ära näidataks.*
 do-INF if he-ALL ÄRA show-IMS
 'if somebody showed him [how to do it]'
 4 (1.0)
 5 T: *no ega seda saab ainult üks kord teha [---] (AU)*
 but EPI it.PRT can-3SG only one time do-INF
 'I n f a c t it can only be done once'

Thus, in the epistemic-adversative function, *ega* seems to have lost both its original component meanings: the negation and the additivity. In current spoken usage the pattern with positive clauses is quite well-spread, while it is very rare in written texts other than those on the internet. For example, an online newspaper article about cat rabies with a picture of a cat claimed to be unrelated to the story received the following commentary:

- (27) *Ega see pildil olev kass on ka*
 EPI this picture-ADS be-PRP cat be.3SG too
 'I n f a c t the cat in the picture'
kahtlase näoga... (NET)
 suspicious:GEN face-COM
 'looks suspicious too...'

Ega in this claim simply shows that the upcoming clause is going to be in a contrastive relationship with what has been assumed so far, namely that the cat in the picture does not have rabies. It also expresses epistemic certainty, as in contrast with neutral adversative conjunctions, such as *aga*

'but', it epistemically reinforces the statement. *Ega* has thus undergone a process of subjectification. Subjectification means the acquisition of certain meaning characteristics that pertain not so much to the world being talked about as to the speaker's organization of that world in the act of speaking (Traugott 1980 : 47, 1989 : 540, 1996). In other words, the language of the external world is regularly used metaphorically to refer to the internal mental world (Sweetser 1990) and these usages may become routinized. In the patterns described in the current section, *ega* functions within the domain of discourse as an epistemic-adversative particle and marks the subjective knowledge state of the speaker.

This development has not occurred abruptly but through a series of gradual transitions, involving what is called *pragmatic strengthening* in the early stages of grammaticalization, whereby the original invited inferences and conversational implicatures are strengthened (Traugott 1988, 1995; Traugott, König 1991). In the earliest texts only the additive and negative meanings were present, but in the 18th century we begin to find examples with an adversative connotation, and the tendency seems to have strengthened even further in the present-day usage. In the discourse context of connecting two negative clauses, repeated invited inferences of epistemic strength and oppositional stance have resulted in the development of *ega* into an epistemic-adversative particle.

One could wonder whether a conjunction and a particle can be placed at different points on a grammaticalization cline, as it is not obvious that one of them is more grammatical than the other. However, there is earlier literature arguing that the development of discourse particles from conjunctions is a process of grammaticalization. Examples include final *though* (Barth-Weingarten, Couper-Kuhlen 2002) and final *but* in English (Mulder, Thompson 2008) and the initial particles *obwohl* (Günthner 2000; Diewald 2006) and *weil* in German (Diewald 2006). All these forms increase the pragmatic "work" they do in language use over time, expanding their scope (Mulder, Thompson 2008 : 198). In a similar way, during the development from a conjunction to a turn-initial particle, *ega* has increased its scope from proposition to discourse. It now functions across speakers and their turns. Accordingly, its earlier pragmatic inferences have strengthened and consolidated into a new meaning.

To summarize, the initial particle *ega* expresses the speaker's epistemic certainty and attends to (probable) assumptions and presuppositions expressed by the interlocutor by opposing them. *Ega* has been structurally reanalyzed as a clause-initial item instead of functioning as a conjunction. The *ega*-initiated utterances are thus "polyphonic", reflecting the image of the interlocutor (Nølke, Fløttum, Norén 2004 : 117–127) and displaying intersubjective connotations that can be glossed as 'I know better than you'. Occasionally either the epistemic or the adversative component dominates, as was suggested in Examples (5)–(6), alt. (25)–(27) but *ega* regularly signals both. It is a discourse-functional device of dealing with the asymmetrical epistemic stance of the speakers, making salient their differential access to knowledge.

At the same time, *ega* can express relative certainty about some matter that in the first hand belongs to the interlocutor's area of competence. This is the usage that enables its ongoing functional reanalysis as a question word,

which will be illustrated in the following section of the paper. Schematically, the developmental cline now splits into two branches: from the turn-initial epistemic-adversative usage with negative items *ega* develops into a universal adversative particle with discourse structuring functions, and from the same epistemic-adversative usage the question word is still developing.

Ega in questions

Considering the arguments thus far, it is perhaps surprising that the particle *ega* has consistently been characterized as a negative question word in Estonian grammars (Metslang 1981 : 27; Sang 1983 : 142; Erelt, Kasik, Metslang, Rajandi, Ross, Saari, Tael, Vare 1995 : 168, 112). For example, the following sentence (28) is marked with a question mark in the Literary Corpus from the 1990s. In the question pattern, the epistemic nature of *ega* is best rendered with 'I assume, I suppose' in English.

- (28) *Ega see mees talle ometi kosja*
 EPI/Q this man she-ALL for.god's.sake proposal.ILL
 'I a s s u m e, this man has not come'
pole tulnud? (LE)
 NEG-be come-PPT
 'to propose to her, for god's sake?'

Like in many other languages, it is possible to use a declarative clause to ask a question in Estonian. It is thus impossible to determine on purely syntactic grounds whether the above *ega*-clause is declarative or interrogative. Questions, in contrast, are a pragmatic category, defined as such by the fact that language users answer them.⁴ This can easily be documented in conversational data, where we can systematically observe how next speakers react to *ega*-initiated turns. The conversation analytic next-turn proof procedure enables us to gather evidence for the missing link between the epistemic particle *ega* and its interpretation as a question word. We can see how speakers regularly treat the epistemic *ega* as initiating turns that make relevant confirming answers.

As *ega* only occurs with negative questions, these questions are conducive to negative answers. Indeed, the answers in our data often confirm what the speaker of an *ega*-initiated utterance assumed. Examples (29)–(30) show unproblematically confirming answers to *ega*-initiated utterances.

- (29) T: *ja: ja .hh ega Kai ei elistand sulle*
 yeah yeah. EPI/Q NAME NEG call-PPT you-ALL
 'Yeah. I a s s u m e Kai didn't call you?'
 E: *ei* (AU)
 'No'

- (30) E: *.h eee kule ega Teivot ei ole see*
 listen:IMP:2SG EPI/Q NAME-PRT NEG be this
 'Listen, I a s s u m e Teivo is not at home'

⁴ The next-turn proof procedure is a standard in conversation studies as a straightforward way of showing that a declarative utterance was treated as a question by the speakers of the language. The turn-by-turn displays of understanding constitute the very basis of human intersubjectivity (Heritage 1984 : 254–260).

nädalavahetus kodu
 weekend home.INS
 'during the weekend?'
 V: *ei: ole* (AU)
 NEG be
 'No, (he) isn't'

In conversational sequences we are able to see how utterances initiated by *ega* are regularly treated as making a response relevant. At the same time, in all the cases *ega* retains the function of an epistemic marker, expressing the speaker's certainty that the answer will be confirming. This last stage of *ega* development thereby evidences *i n t e r s u b j e c t i f i c a t i o n*, a process whereby meanings become more centered on the 'self' of the addressee, as explained in Traugott (2003). It is possible that the intersubjective aspect of *ega* is still a pragmatic inference and not yet a fully coded meaning-form pair (see Traugott 2010 : 37 for a discussion of similar cases). *Ega*-initiated utterances, in case treated as questions, are strongly conducive to negative (i.e. confirming) answers.

In 56% of the cases where an answer is made relevant in an *ega*-initiated turn, the answer is confirming, i.e. negative, showing that the high epistemic certainty expressed in the question was justified. Disconfirming answers occur in merely 22% of the cases (Keevallik 2009).⁵ Furthermore, these are often instances where negation is conventionally used for politeness reasons, which is also typical of items that have undergone intersubjectification (Traugott 2010 : 61). Interestingly, politeness is mentioned as a lexical feature of *ega* in the comprehensive dictionary, EKS. An instance of that is shown in Example (31). The representative of an information service line is trying to guess which dental clinic the caller is interested in. She politely suggests a place, using a negative formulation, making a negative answer straightforward. The customer, however, accepts the suggestion.

(31) V: *e laste stoma- ega te Raekojaplatsi ei mõtle.=*
 child-PL.GEN dental- EPI/Q you NAME.PRT NEG mean
 'Children's dental- I a s s u m e you don't mean the Town hall square'
 H: *⇒jah, just (seal on.) (TC)*
 yeah exactly there be.3SG
 'Yeah, exactly. There is one'

All the above "questions" (28–31) can be analyzed as featuring declarative syntax. Crucially, they all concern matters that belong to the recipient's area of competence or territory of knowledge. In Example (29) only the recipient of the *ega*-initiated turn can tell whether Kai called, in (30) only the recipient of the phone call knows who is at home, in (31) only the customer can confirm which clinic she is interested in. Therefore, a confirmation or disconfirmation of the content is relevantly due from the recipient of the *ega*-utterance. Consider the negative statement in Example (32) for comparison: the negative declarative sentence makes relevant a confirmation because it is a statement about something that only the recipient knows about.

⁵ In the rest of the cases the answer is not straightforward.

- (32) M: *ta sulle elistand ei ole.*
 he you-ALL call-PPT NEG be
 'He hasn't called you, has he?'
 V: *ei ole.* (TC)
 NEG be
 'No, he hasn't'

The same kind of question-answer sequence is here achieved without the *ega*-preface, the only difference being that the question is not epistemically enhanced. This conversational regularity was first described by Labov and Fanshel (1977 : 100), who call the type of utterances represented in the initial lines of Examples (29)–(32) "A's statements about B-events", where A is the speaker and B her interlocutor. When the content of a statement concerns something that is in the first instance known to the interlocutor and not the speaker, it makes relevant a confirmation or disconfirmation by the interlocutor. This explains why *ega*-initiated utterances in the earlier sections of our paper do not receive answers, while the ones described in the current section do. Recipient response is triggered by the type of content conveyed in these turns and the social action they implement, namely asking for a confirmation. *Ega*-initiated utterances are thus not grammatically interrogative but declaratives that are interpreted as questions because they concern matters confirmable by the recipient.

There are four arguments that support the analysis of *ega*-initiated utterances as declaratives rather than interrogatives. First, similar utterances in the first hand concerning the speaker herself are not treated as making relevant a confirmation. Second, in other kinds of actions and in other sequential positions, *ega*-initiated utterances are not treated as questions. Third, *ega* cannot be used as a question word with positive clauses. Finally, *ega* co-occurs with other epistemic certainty markers such as *vist* 'probably, I assume', *ju* (that indicates shared knowledge), and *ometi*, approx. 'for God's sake', which cannot be used in prototypical polar interrogatives. An instance of such a collocation could be seen in Example (28) above. In short, some *ega*-initiated clauses function as questions due to their sequential position and B-event content. They are treated as making relevant an answer by the recipient, thus functioning as questions.

This intersubjective usage of *ega* has become extremely common in some types of formulaic action, such as asking for somebody at the beginning of a phone call. The characteristically negative form of these actions indicates that a negative answer is expected, politely expressing pessimism about the possibility of a positive answer (Brown, Levinson 1987 : 173–176). This politeness aspect makes *ega*-questions usable as requests, which are inherently sensitive actions. An example of a routinized institutional request from a call to an information line is shown in (33).

- (33) H: *tere päevast. ega te ei oska öelda*
 hi day-ELT EPI/Q you.PL NEG can say-INF
 'Hello. I a s s u m e you cannot tell'
Võru bussijaama telefoninumbrit.
 NAME.GEN bus.station-GEN phone.number-PRT
 'the phone number to the bus station in Võru?'

V: *m üks hetk* (TC)
 one moment
 'Just a moment'

Perhaps it is due to the high frequency of these conventionalized polite *ega*-utterances that the particle *ega* is commonly analyzed as a question word in Estonian grammars. The question pattern still partly relies on the epistemic meaning of *ega* that establishes the speaker as being quite certain about the recipient's confirming answer. At the same time, the recipient is invited to authoritatively confirm or disconfirm the content of the *ega*-initiated utterance, which means that the speaker of the *ega*-utterance is no longer established as the only epistemic authority on the matter (compare the above Examples (16), (17), (19), (20), where the speaker clearly expresses his/her epistemic authority). It may thus be the case that the epistemic meaning of *ega* is currently bleaching and we may be witnessing an ongoing development of *ega* into a neutral non-epistemic question word. It is possible that the speakers have already reanalyzed it as a question word, albeit only usable with negative formulations. This would not be surprising, as it is a well-established fact that interrogative sentences are the prototypical linguistic environments of licensing negative polarity items along with negative sentences (Klima 1964). While having completely lost the adversative meaning in this usage pattern, *ega* at least seems to have preserved its clause-initial position throughout its development.⁶

Question-marking would constitute yet another new syntactic function for *ega*. However, some crucial steps remain before it can be considered a full-fledged non-epistemic question word:

1. It should be usable with positive clauses.
2. It should be perceived as a question outside the conversational context described above where the speaker expresses something that belongs to the recipient's area of competence (without only relying on the question mark in writing, as in Example (28)).
3. It should co-occur with clause-final question words, such as *või/vä* 'or', *jah* 'yeah', which it now rarely does.

The fact that *ega* already, even though very rarely, co-occurs with other question words is a grammatical proof of the speakers' reanalysis of *ega* as a question word. Example (34) shows a case that combines the clause-initial *ega* with the clause-final question word *vä*, which has itself been grammaticalized from the conjunction *või* 'or' (Lindström 2001).

(34) *ega see ei: takista vast sind pittu tulema vä.*
 EPI/Q this NEG prevent maybe you-PRT party.ILL come:SUP or
 'I a s s u m e this does not prevent you from coming to the party o r?'

Summarizing the argument in this section, the crucial link in the development of the conjunction *ega* into a question word is the clause-initial epistemic usage, where it expresses a relatively high degree of certainty

⁶ There are altogether four cases in our data where *ega* occurs clause-finally, two of them in the literary sources and two in the spoken corpora (see the last line of Example (22)). In two cases the clause is interpretable as a question. We cannot thus say anything conclusive on the clause-final usage apart from the fact that *ega* is indeed somewhat mobile as a particle.

about something that is in the first instance known to the recipient. These turns make relevant a confirmation or disconfirmation by the recipient. The frequent implementation of this sequential pattern seems to have resulted in the ongoing functional reanalysis of *ega* as a polar question word among the speakers of Estonian. In this process the item does not change its grammatical category — it is still a particle — but merely undergoes intersubjectification and functional reanalysis.

Quantitative analysis

In the above we have shown qualitatively how the combination of a negation word and an additive adverb first developed into a conjunction, then into an epistemic-adversative particle/adverb, and how in certain positions in conversation it is currently being reanalyzed as a question word. In terms of frequency through the ages, the functions appear as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

The frequency of different functions of *ega* throughout available history in the corpora

Period	Type of data	Conjunction				Epistemic-adversative particle						Total
		Neutral		Adversative		Negative clause				Positive clause		
						Interpreted as a statement		Interpreted as a question				
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
16–17 th cent.	written	164	97	0	0	5	3	0	0	0	0	169
18 th cent.	written	557	91	5	1	54	9	1	0	0	0	617
1 st half of 19 th	written	619	77	97	12	86	11	7	1	0	0	809
1890s	written	129	66	19	10	37	19	10	5	0	0	195
1930s	written	222	44	92	18	173	34	16	3	1	0	504
1960s	written	109	43	42	17	99	39	3	1	0	0	253
1990s	written	499	49	170	17	308	30	37	4	1	0	1015
contemporary	spoken	43	8	48	9	226	44	141	28	48	9	506

Some comments are in order regarding the counts in Table 1. The category "neutral conjunction" includes both clausal and word phrase conjunctions, but mostly there are conjoined negative clauses. The category "adversative conjunction" contains cases where there is a clear connection between the two clauses in different polarities, and the negative one often reformulates the prior positive clause. The adversative and even epistemic meaning is likely to be present in some cases with conjoined negative clauses, but in case the first clause is positive and the second one negative, *ega* is clearly not a neutral conjunction any more. As was mentioned earlier, in contemporary spoken data there was not a single use of *ega* connecting two negative clauses.

In the category of "epistemic-adversative particle" the upcoming clauses are much more independent of the prior clause than in the category "adversative conjunction". For example, in conversational usage altogether 85 cases

were turn-initial and thus independent of the prior utterance. The majority of *ega*-initiated positive clauses were also turn-initial (see contemporary spoken usage). For the spoken data, instances where the speaker abandons the clause are not counted. Also, formulaic closing utterances (*ega midagi*, approx. 'well then'), responses (*ega jah* 'probably yeah', *ega vist* 'maybe not') and the semantically empty utterance-final formula (*ega midagi* 'and anything') have not been counted.

Table 1 shows that there has been a general increase in the share of the use of *ega* as an epistemic-adversative particle as well as an increase in its occurrence in questions. At the same time the share of neutral conjunctive uses has diminished. This demonstrates that the word has gradually developed new functions. The epistemic and question functions have gained in numbers simultaneously, which supports the argument that they belong together and that some epistemically marked utterances are regularly interpreted as questions. The fact that the share of questions in the entire database has risen much less than the share of the rest of particle use, may reflect the fact that the question-pattern is more typical of spoken usage. This is evident in the last two rows of the table, where written and spoken data from the very same period can be compared. The question function is considerably more frequent in conversation, most probably developing there, as also suggested in our qualitative analysis. Therefore, a legitimate possibility is that it has been present in spoken usage all the way and we have just not been able to see it in the written sources. The diachronically increasing numbers of questions in written usage nevertheless support the thesis of a gradual development of this function through the recorded history of Estonian. Furthermore, many early written texts were meant for oral presentation and should thus not diverge too much from spoken usage.

Even though the spoken usage cannot be directly compared to earlier sources, it gives a good idea of where the different functions thrive. The use of the epistemic-adversative particle with positive clauses is clearly a feature of everyday interaction and not of written texts. It is also well represented in the Dialect Archive, where frequency counts would unfortunately not make much sense, as the data is collected on selective note-cards across a large time span. The question pattern is less represented in the Dialect Archive, as asking questions did not constitute a predominant task of the informant in traditional dialect interviews. Nevertheless, the use of *ega* in questions is also mentioned in the dialect lexicon (EMS).

Conclusion

In this paper we have argued that the development of *ega* represents a case of grammaticalization. It has undergone a significant phonological reduction from *ep/eb/ei + kaas/kahs/kahn/kz* to *ega*. At the same time, it has lost in semantic complexity: from expressing negation and additivity it has started to mark speaker certainty. Syntactically, *ega* first developed into a conjunction, as was observed in the earliest available sources, losing the syntactic freedom of its constitutive parts on the way. It then developed into an epistemic-adversative particle/adverb through pragmatic strengthening and subjectification. The clause-initial *ega* indicates a meta-textual stance in discourse — a counter-argument to what preceded or what

could be assumed on the basis of prior talk. The development, which constitutes a novel cline of grammaticalization, can schematically be outlined as follows.

Table 2

The syntactic and functional development of *ega*

Stage	Syntactic structure	Semantic-pragmatic function
1	negation verb/word + adverb	<i>ei + kaas</i> 'not also'
2	negative clause/phrase <i>ega</i> negative clause/phrase	<i>ega</i> as a neutral conjunction
3	clause <i>ega</i> negative clause	<i>ega</i> as an adversative conjunction, marking certainty
4	(clause) <i>ega</i> negative clause	<i>ega</i> as an epistemic-adversative particle/adverb
5a	<i>ega</i> clause	<i>ega</i> as an adversative particle
5b	<i>ega</i> negative clause involving a B-event	<i>ega</i> reanalyzed as a question word

We have shown that the Estonian epistemic-adversative particle *ega* is currently being reanalyzed as a question word in specific sequential positions primarily in spoken interaction in the process of intersubjectification. In requests, the format expresses conventionalized pessimism about the likelihood of a positive answer. In questions, it conveys certainty, suggestive of a confirming negative answer, while the content is nevertheless left for the recipient to confirm. In this function, *ega* is being heard as a question device.

The overall development of *ega* has gone from two different syntactic functions of the two words (negation + adverb) to a single conjunction and then potentially to a question word across the epistemic-adversative pattern. This constitutes a new cline of grammaticalization, even though it reflects the well-known process of (inter)subjectification. Importantly, the above discussion shows that it may be crucial to consider what speakers do when they accomplish conversational sequences, such as questions and answers, as that may turn out to be a key context in the semantic-pragmatic development of a linguistic item, particularly as regards intersubjectification.

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Transcription and glossing conventions

/ — punctuation mark in older scripts; **underlining** — stress or emphasis; **bold** — the item in focus; - — truncation; = — latching; (0.5) — pause length in tenths of a second; (.) — micropause; : — lengthening of a sound; <@ @> — smiling voice; **hh** — inbreath; **hh** — outbreath; . — pitch fall at the end of an intonation unit; , — level pitch at the end of an intonation unit; - — unfinished intonation unit; **1, 2, 3** — person; **ADS** — adessive; **ALL** — allative; **COM** — comitative; **ELT** — elative; **EPI** — epistemic marker; **GEN** — genitive; **GI** — emphatic suffix; **ILL** — illative; **IMF** — imperfect; **IMP** — imperative; **IMS** — impersonal; **INF** — infinitive; **INS** — inessive; **NEG** — negation particle; **PRT** — partitive; **PL** — plural; **PPT** — past participle; **PRP** — present participle; **Q** — question word; **SG** — singular; **SUP** — supine; **TRA** — translative; **other capital letters** — untranslatable particles.

Abbreviations

EKS — Eesti kirjakeele seletussõnaraamat I–VII, Tallinn 1988–2007; **EMS** — Eesti murrete sõnaraamat I–(V), Tallinn 1994–; **ÕS** — Eesti keele sõnaraamat ÕS 1999, Tallinn 1999.

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ЛЕЕЛО КЕЕВАЛЛИК (Линчэпинг), КЮЛЛИ ХАБИХТ (Тарту)

**ГРАММАТИКАЛИЗАЦИЯ, (ИНТЕР)СУБЪЕКТИВАЦИЯ
И КОММУНИКАТИВНЫЕ СЕКВЕНЦИИ. ЭПИСТЕМИЧЕСКАЯ
(ВОПРОСИТЕЛЬНАЯ) ЧАСТИЦА ЭСТОНСКОГО ЯЗЫКА *ega***

В статье рассматривается морфосинтаксическое и семантико-прагматическое развитие отрицательного слова *ei* и неизменяемого слова *kaas* 'с, и' в эпистемическую (вопросительную) частицу *ega*. В современной грамматике эстонского языка *ega* трактуется как союз, отрицательная и вопросительная частица. Авторы описывают формирование лексико-грамматических значений и взаимосвязи между локальными контекстами использования этих лексем на протяжении примерно 500 лет. Источники примеров, обзор которых представлен в статье, многообразны: от древнейших письменных памятников до транскрипций современных устных разговоров. По данным древнеэстонского литературного языка, частица *ega* вначале грамматикализовалась как союзное слово, а позднее как эпистемический маркер, который стали употреблять в начале предложения в качестве модальной частицы. Как эпистемическая адверсативная частица, *ega* выражает субъективную оценку действительности говорящим и противопоставление предыдущему дискурсу. К настоящему времени произошел реанализ эпистемического адверсативного маркера как вопросительной частицы в тех контекстах, где отрицательная пропозиция касается информации, относящейся к области знаний воспринимающего. Исследование выявляет, что анализ коммуникативных секвенций позволяет объяснить (интер)субъективацию эпистемических частиц наилучшим образом. В этой статье представлена новая цепочка грамматикализации вопросительной частицы *ega*. Используемая методика объединяет коммуникативный анализ и диахронический метод исследования.