

# THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN SWEDISH *BARA*: FROM ADJECTIVE TO CONDITIONAL SUBORDINATOR

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## 1. Introduction

The MSw conditional subordinator *bara* conveys two distinct sub-meanings; by using *bara* ('if only') in stead of the default *om* ('if') the speaker underlines that what is expressed in the apodosis is desired, and that the condition in the protasis is explicitly sufficient. These semantic properties of conditional *bara* make the use of it restricted (Wijk-Andersson 1991:179) – it can not, as a rule, be used in atypical conditional clauses (like for instance speech act conditionals, cf Sweetser 1990). In this paper the background of conditional *bara* is investigated, from both a semantic and a syntactic perspective, and it is argued that both the path of change as well as the origin of *bara* have contributed to the semantic peculiarities of conditional *bara*.

*Bara* is a MSw word that is both polysemous and multifunctional. SAG (*the Swedish Academy Grammar*) provides two entries in the index (an adverb *bara* and a subordinator *bara*), but to study these two words, the reader is referred to no less than 42 paragraphs in 14 different chapters. As the extensive coverage of *bara* in SAG indicates, the situation in modern Swedish is strikingly complex. Recently, *bara* has for instance become a discourse particle in the shape of *ba* (cf Eriksson 1997, Dryselius & Lundin 1999). The crucial period for the development of conditional *bara* is however 1500-1800, approximately, and at this time the semantic and syntactic features of *bara* are somewhat easier to grasp.

As a conditional subordinator, *bara* appears in the beginning of the 18:th century. The first examples in SAOB (B 295) are from 1786, but it was actually used already 1726, an example which SAOB refers to but does not quote, and in the stylistically innovative journal *Argus*, which was launched in 1732. The etymological origin for *bara* is quite clear. It was originally an adjective with the meaning 'naked, uncovered', and it is of course related to PDE *bare* (Hellquist 1980:51, Skeat 1953:48).

The similar conditionals *allena(st)* and *blott*, that may have affected the change of *bara*, and the pair *enbart* and *endast* will also be taken into consideration.

An important source for data about *bara* is, except for the standard works SAOB (the article about *bara* is however a bit antique, as it was completed in 1899) and SAG, a recent dissertation by Wijk-Andersson (1991), which I will refer to quite frequently.

## 2. *Bara* until ca 1500: etymology, functions and meanings

*Bara* was originally, according to SAOB (B 292), an inflected variant of the EOSw adjective *bar*, which had the meanings 'bare, naked, uncovered'; the affix *-a* is frequent in the nominal paradigms of inflection in OSw. The root is probably Indoeuropean (Hellquist 1980:51, Pfeifer 1989:122), and it consequently appears, with approximately the same basic meaning, in a number of languages that are closely related to Swedish.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Another possible explanation for the adverbial *bara* might be that it has been developed from the adjective *bar* through derivation. In the old Nordic languages, a derivating suffix *-a* could be employed when adjectives were turned into adverbs (Hanssen et al 1975:86). Both *ill-a* and *gärn-a* are examples of such derivation (cf Wijk-Andersson 1991:52f). However, it seems as

In EOSw, the adjective *bar* had already developed the meaning 'obvious, manifest' (Söderwall I:78), which in MSw survives in the legal phrase *på bar gärning* ('in flagranti'). Later, in the 16:th century, additional functions and meanings of *bar* and *bara* arose, and since then *bara* has continually been in a state of flux, both syntactically and semantically.

SAOB (B 281-295) accounts for three lexical instances of *bara*: as an inflected form of the adjective *bar*, as an uninflectable adjective and as an adverb and subordinator. A number of various meanings are presented in SAOB, and I will suggest that these can be attributed to two different paths of meaning development. One of these, the meaning of 'obvious' and the related meanings, was a semantic cul-de-sac.

### 3. The development of EMSw *bar* and *bara*

In the beginning of the 16:th century, when the OSw period ends, the adjective *bar* may mean either 'naked, uncovered' (1. a) or 'obvious, manifest' (1. b).

1. a. oc the hwggo hiälmen aff honom oc bleff sedan **baar** oc owänkter [...] (Troja)  
*and they hacked helmet-the off him and became then bare and unprotected [...]*  
'and they hacked off his helmet and he then became **bare** and unprotected [...]

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this kind of suffixation was rather rare, and it is very unlikely that it was in use at the time when adverbial *bara* appears (SAOB:s first examples of adverbial *bara* are from the end of the 16:th century). Therefore the aforementioned hypothesis must be preferred.

- b. Heluertet är **baart** för honom, och förderffuet haffuer intet  
offuerteckelse. (SAOB, 1541)  
*hell-the is obvious for him and perdition-the has no excuse*  
'Hell is **obvious** for him, and the perdition has no excuse'

In the end of the 16:th century, an adverbial *bara* appears, with the meaning 'completely, fully' (2. a), and some decades later we find examples of an adjectival *bar* with a very similar meaning (2. b).

2. a. [Han] leet [...] föra henne **bara** nakot vthi ett gemeene Skökiehws. (SAOB, 1591)  
*[he] let [...] take her stark naked into a common whorehouse*  
'[he] had [...] her taken **stark** naked to a common whorehouse'
- b. Sin Son then hon **baar** vng leffde effter sigh vthi Danmarck. (SAOB, 1620)  
*her son which she all young leaved after refl.in Denmark*  
'her son who she **completely** young left behind in Denmark'

It seems likely that this meaning ('completely') emanates from the earlier meaning 'obvious, manifest' (1. b). Another meaning that probably is related to this small semantic field is a meaning related to money ('cash'), which we find as early as 1540 (SAOB:B 286). SAOB mentions the German constructions *bares geld, bar bezahlen* as a possible source of influence for the emergence of this meaning. In contemporary Swedish, none of these meanings are in use (except for in the fossilized phrase *på bar gärning*, as was mentioned above). The related meanings 'obvious', 'completely' and 'cash' consequently seem to have been dead ends, and they did not, I assume, take part in the rise of conditional *bara*.

In the early 17:th century, however, we find a new meaning of the adjectival *bar*: 'only, merely, no more than' (3. a). At about the same time (the first example in SAOB is from 1620), an adverbial *bara* appears, with exactly the same meaning (3. b):

3. a. Uti Canalen och Gibraltar, ther man icke [...] tullar för **bara** passagen. (SAOB, 1640).  
*in channel-the and Gibraltar where you not [...] pay for only passage-the*  
'in the Channel and Gibraltar, where you not [...] pay duty for **merely** the passage'
- b. En manade den andre ut til at fäckta **bara** för skryyt skull. (Columbus)  
*one urged the other PL to fence only för boast sake*  
'one urged the other to fence **only** for the sake of boasting'

It is plausible that this meaning ('only') has emerged directly from the basic meaning of *bar* ('naked, uncovered'), I think, since these meanings in a sense are overlapping; a naked sword is nothing but a sword, or only a sword. It is hence not surprising to find ambiguous examples:

4. Så stule de bort hans swälzbalia, at han danza mädh **bara** värian. (Horn)  
*so stole they away his scabbard that he danced with only rapier-the*  
'then they stole his scabbard, so that he danced with **only/the bare** rapier'

It also seems clear that an adjective meaning 'only' easily may be analyzed as an adverb – the abstract meaning no longer requires a nominal complement, and an element meaning 'only' can modify events as well as nominal phrases.

So, in the end of the 17:th century, *bara* carries three specific meanings: 'naked', 'obvious' (which I from now will ignore, for reasons mentioned above)

and the exclusive (i. e, non-inclusive) meaning 'only', and it may function as an adjective or as an VP-adverb, but not yet as a subordinator.

#### 4. The emergence of conditional *bara*

##### 4.1. The data

The very earliest example of a conditional *bara* (5. a) can be found in a protocol from the Swedish House of Knights, in an utterance of count Lewenhaupt (SAOB refers to this example, but does not quote it, and Wijk-Andersson seems to have missed it). Another early example (5. c) comes from a spoken line in a comedy, and in the context, which otherwise is ridiculously highbrow, it is clearly informal. Also the example from SAOB (5. d) is written as direct speech. In her samples from *Argus*, Wijk-Andersson (1991:77) finds eight instances of *bara*, of which four comes from a chapter about the folly of servants (like 5. b). She points out (1991:78, 83) that in the 18:th century *bara* did indeed belong to contexts of ordinary life; it is at this time unceremonious and down-to-earth, a statement confirmed by SAOB (B 3476).

5. a. Gref Charl Emil Lewenhaupt: Vj skrida til vahlet, **bara** vij intet taga någon utom Ridдарhuset. (SAOB, 1726)  
*count Charl Emil Lewenhaupt we go to election-the only we not take anyone outside House of Knights-the*  
'count Charl Emil Lewenhaupt: we proceed to elections, **if only** we do not take someone outside of the house of lords'

- b. Gerna, **bara** hon intet will wara olåtig: Hon skal kunna  
 giöra god Ragout utan Champignon [...] (Argus, 1732)  
*gladly, only she not will be unpractical she shall can*  
*make good ragout without mushroom [...]*  
 'with delight, **if only** she is not unpractical. She must be able  
 to make nice ragout without mushrooms [...]'
- c. det bästa är at han bär hiertat tämeligen lågt i böxorne, så at **bara** jag ser på mitt  
 steke-spett här, så kusar han som en hund. (Gyllenborg)  
*the best is that he carries heart-the quite low in trousers-the so that only I look at*  
*my skewer here then crouches he like a dog*  
 'the best thing is that he carries his heart quite low in his trousers, so that **if only** I  
 glance at my skewer here, then he crouches like a dog'
- d. Jag har så mycket [...] at berätta er, men **bara** jag får se er så  
 glömmet jag bort althop. (SAOB, 1786)  
*I have so much [...] to tell you but only I may see you then forget I everything*  
 'I have so much [...] to tell you, but **if only** I get to see you, then I forget  
 everything'

In (5. c, d), *bara* appears with the properties of a typical conditional subordinator – it is clearly the initial word in the protasis, and the apodosis is headed by *så* (*then*).

There are a small number of examples where the subordinating *bara* appears with another subordinator (like in 6.), but these are certainly very few (I have only found a single one, also from *Argus*, in the examined texts):

6. Stor sak huru det går utvärtes, **bara at** man är frisk invärtes. (Argus)  
*big thing how it goes outside only that you are healthy inside*  
 'no matter what happens on the outside, **if only** one is healthy inside'

SAOB does not mention any combinations with *bara* and a subordinator, which it does in the case of *ifall*, for instance. Thus it does not seem likely that the subordinating *bara* is a result of any form of univerbation (cf Braunmüller 1978).

From a syntactic perspective, we hence must assume that it is the bare adverb *bara* which is the source of the conditional, since there are just no other options. The question is, then: how did *bara* change from adverb to subordinator, and how did it acquire the distinct semantic features?

#### 4.2. A possible path of change

Interestingly, from the same time as the conditional *bara* appears, one finds examples of another novelty, exemplified below ((7. b) is an example from a Swedish-English-Latin dictionary, in which *bara* is used as a direct translation of *but*):

7. a. Lät **bara** min Sissa Cammar-Piga komma fram (Argus)  
*let only my Sissa chamber-maid come PL*  
 'let only my chambermaid Sissa approach'
- b. **Bara** lyd mig åt, Be but ruled (SAOB, 1741)  
*only obey me PL*  
 'just obey me'

- c. Gå dumma Höna -- **bara** gå. (SAOB, 1793)  
*go stupid hen just go*  
 'leave stupid hen – just leave'

Here we find that the adverb *bara* has acquired a new, not strictly exclusive meaning, which may be called desiderative (cf Trask 1996:80), since it underlines a wish or desire, just as *only* does in *If he only could leave now!* Wijk-Andersson (1991:82) considers, according to her table 3.4.3.I, this use of *bara* to be modal, and she asserts that this is a new meaning of *bara* that is developed in the 18:th century. SAG (4:161ff) states that in the exclusive meaning of *bara* an element of negation ('nothing but', 'no more than') is incorporated, and that this element is "fairly clearly discernible" (my translation) also when *bara* is used in desiderative imperative clauses of the type in (7. a - c). SAG:s idea is that an imperative clause like *Bara gå!* ('Only leave!') represents a wish, that can be formulated as *I wish nothing but that you leave.*

The desiderative sentence adverb *bara* probably emerged when *bara* (in the mening 'only') was used as a sentence adverb in clauses expressing desires (imperatives, desiderative exclamations etc). The gram was reinterpreted by speakers who assumed that the desiderativity in these clauses was dependent on *bara*. A prerequisite for this change is however that *bara* first evolved from VP-adverb to sentence adverb, a change that strongly reminds of the change of *anyway*, as described by Tabor & Traugott (1998:256). In certain positions, *bara* could be analyzed as a wide scope-item, a sentence adverb. The structural possibilities can be illustrated by the following examples, in which the underlined segments represent the scope of the corresponding English adverb *only* (cf Wijk-Andersson 1991:120, Abraham 2001:40f):

8.
  - a. I can see **only** Calvin (and noone else).
  - b. I can **only** see Calvin (and noone else).
  - c. I can **only** see Calvin (I can not hear him).
  - d. I can **only** see Calvin (I can not see Hobbes).
  - e. I can only see Calvin (but Mary can see Hobbes)
  - f. If I only could see Calvin!

No single part of the clause in (8. e) is stressed, an indication that it really is the entire clause that forms the focus of *only*. Similarly, the scope of *only* in (8. f), a desiderative exclamation, can be assumed to be the entire clause (i. e., that *only* here is a sentence adverb, cf Trask 1996:251; SAG 4:84, Wijk-Andersson 1991:169). *Bara* shares all of these qualities, and given that the desiderative adverb *bara* also is uninflectable and sometimes sentence initial (as in 7. b, c), it thus displays a number of syntactic properties that are typical and significant for subordinators. Other factors of importance are of course that imperatives and desiderative clauses due to their special semantic features may be interpreted as conditional clauses, when the context allows it, and that *allena* and *blott*, which were in use during the period in question, had exactly the same properties as desiderative *bara* (see the following section).

Regarding the semantic change from exclusive to desiderative, SAG (4:161ff) claims that in both the exclusive and the desiderative meaning a negative element is incorporated, as was mentioned above, and such an element can be

said to have been present already in the original adjective, meaning 'uncovered'. The development of desiderative *bara* then involves an extension of the exclusive meaning ('no more than') on a new unit, a desiderative clause. On the other hand, the desiderative context seems to obscure the streak of negativity in *bara*; SAOB (B 3478) defines the desiderative meaning of *bara* as: "without pronounced exclusive meaning, to stronger emphasize a request, a condition, a wish or a statement" (my translation). Also Wijk-Andersson defines the desiderative *bara* (which she calls modal) as non-exclusive (1991:171ff), and Abraham clearly states (regarding the German focus particles *bloß* and *nur*) that "What focus particles do, in general, is measuring out a local, direct scope of predicate properties much akin to deictic pronominal *das*" (Abraham 2001:42), and does not mention any negative features of such particles. The negation that I think is immanent in *bara* is probably hard to detect since it is no lexical negation, but a restriction of the focussed elements.

When *bara* appears in the exclusive meaning, it forms part of a statement, or a proposition, whereas the desiderative *bara* per definition can not appear in such a context; desiderativity presupposes irrealis/unreal modus, or hypotheticality. One can not wish a fact. Hence, when the exclusive *bara* is used in desiderative contexts, it is part of a hypothetical clause. And hypothetical clauses are regularly interpreted as conditional clauses whenever a causal relation can be established.

From a more general perspective, we know that adverbs often are recruited as subordinators (*after, before, since*), and we know that modal expressions may serve as sources for conditionals (Hopper & Traugott 1993:179). Indeed, the Mandarin *yào* can, according to Hopper & Traugott, convey several related meanings: 'wish, be necessary, if'. The semantic resemblance to desiderative

*bara* is obvious. These circumstances all suggest that it must have been a small and perhaps natural step for the language user to start using *bara* as a conditional subordinator.

The chronology of the development of conditional *bara* is a bit unsatisfactory, from a language historian's point of view. When working with texts from such a late period, one would expect to find clear examples of all the relevant stages, neatly following each other and eventually leading to the goal, the conditional subordinator. In the case of *bara*, the really crucial stages and the goal nonetheless appear simultaneously. But I still propose that there is a successive development, and I think that the reason why it is not observable is that *bara* did belong to a style that was not written in any extent until it was too late – the change had already taken place. Subordinating *bara* has furthermore never been frequent, as it has been competing with other conditional subordinators such as the default *om* and its more formal counterparts *allena* and *blott*. The scarcity of conditional *bara* makes the change even harder to observe.

##### **5. Some similar grams: *allena(st)*, *blott* and *enbart/endast***

The topic of Wijk-Andersson's dissertation (1991) is *bara* and its equivalents *blott*, *enbart*, *endast*, *uteslutande* and *allena(st)*. The latter appears in two forms (*allena* and *allenast*), and SAOB (A 991-996) treats them as two separate words, although they clearly are very closely related. The reason for the separate treatment will be presented below. All of these words have a similar basic meaning, but Wijk-Andersson presumes that when they are scrutinized, interesting semantic and syntactic variances will protrude. In the diachronic part

of her dissertation, she provides a detailed account of how new meanings and functions developed in this group of words.

Here, *allena(st)* and *blott* are our main interest, as they, like *bara*, were regularly used as conditional subordinators (*allena* is not used as a conditional in contemporary Swedish, but conditional *blott* may still appear in formal, poetic or archaic contexts). Conditional *allena(st)* predates conditional *bara*, while conditional *blott* seem to have been developed at about the same time as, or shortly after, conditional *bara*. Also *endast* was used as conditional for a short period, and it will be studied in comparison with *enbart*, which did not evolve into a conditional. Consequently, I hope that a study of these words may tell us something about the changes that *bara* has gone through.

As *allena(st)*, *blott* and *endast/enbart* are discussed mainly in search of facts that may corroborate or falsify the hypothesis that desiderative *bara* was a necessary step for the evolution of conditional *bara*, I will concentrate on such features that can be supposed to be salient and relevant in this context, and I almost exclusively rely on the data provided by SAOB and Wijk-Andersson (1991).

### 5.1. *Allena(st)*

*Allena* can be found in EOSw, and as English *alone* it was originally a compound of the parts *all* and *ena* ('one'), meaning 'solo', like the German *allein*. But already in EOSw (Söderwall I:27), *allena* could, either as an adjective or an adverb, also mean 'only'.

*Allenast* is according to SAOB (A 995) the superlative form of *allena*, just as *enast* is the superlative form of *ena* (Söderwall I: 220f). It is hard to tell whether

it was the adjective or the adverb *allena* that served as the base of the comparison, since both adjectives and adverbs were inflected in the comparative and superlative in OSw. Anyhow, *allenast* only served as an adverb in OSw, and it had the meaning 'only' (Söderwall I:27).

Now, since the forms *bara* and *barast* seem to have been synonymous in all relevant aspects, one would perhaps expect that *allena* and *allenast* should follow this pattern. They do not, however. SAOB (A 994) does not report any instances of subordinating *allena*; in stead, *allena* is used, rather rarely, as an adversative coordinator:

9. Alt thet som röres och leffuer, thet ware idher til maat ... **Allena** äter icke kött; thet än nu leffuer j sinom blodh. (SAOB, 1541)

*all that which moves and lives that is-subj. you for food only eat not meat that still lives in its blood*

'everything that moves and lives, that is for you to eat ... **But** do not eat meat, that is still alive in its blood'

But the form *allenast* is used as a conditional subordinator, corresponding to *bara* or *if only*, either in combination with *att* or on its own:

10. a. Giffte sigh hwem [dvs. med hvem] the wilia, **allenast** at the giffte sigh in j sina ätt och faders slechte. (SAOB, 1541)

*marry-subj. refl. whoever they want only that they marry refl. into their family and fathers' dynasty*

'may they marry whoever they want to, **if only** they marry in their family and their fathers' dynasty'

- b. Om någon, för särdeles skiäl och Orsaker skull, wil i Fastan gifta sig, bör sådant icke wägras, **allenast** thet skeer i stillheet, och utan alt Brudebång. (SAOB, 1686)  
*if anyone for special reasons and causes sake want in Lent marry refl. should such not denied-be, only it happens in silence and without all bridenoise*  
 'if anyone, due to special reasons and causes, wants to marry during Lent, then that should not be denied, **if only** it occurs in silence and without any marital noise'

The pair *allena/allenast*, which have precisely the same etymological background, thus offers an interesting asymmetry. Wijk-Andersson (1991:47) finds distinct semantic disparities between the adversative coordinator *allena* and the conditional subordinator *allenast*. *Allena* underlines the opposition, whereas *allenast* underlines the single condition, she puts forth. What lies behind these differences? The cause for the asymmetry can, I think, be found in their adverbial semantics.

*Allena* can, as an adverb, in the 16:th century mean exclusive 'only' and hardly anything else (11. a). SAOB (A 994) quotes one example of an *allena*, in the form *allen*, that can be interpreted as desiderative, but that appears to be a singular example (11. b), which is rather late:

11. a. Messe prester som icke predica vtan **aleena** leffua aff rento som the haffua for messor. (SAOB, 1527)  
*mass priests that not preach but only live of tithes which they have for masses*  
 'mass priests who do not preach but **only** live from tithes that they receive for masses'

- b. Ah! att mitt Höga Mod **allen** ... (det) kunde ljda! (SAOB, 1688)  
*ah that my high courage only ... (it) could suffer*  
 'ah! If my pride **only** ... could endure it!

But *allenast* could clearly have a desiderative meaning already in the first decades of the 16:th century – it is the first sub-meaning of *allenast* that SAOB mentions (A 995) – and, as was seen in (10. a), *allenast* could also (in combination with *att*) be used as a conditional subordinator at that time. In the examples below (both from the Bible), desiderative *allenast* appears in an wishful exclamation (12. a) and in what seems to be a subordinated imperative clause (12. b). This is identical to the distribution of desiderative *bara*.

12. a. Motte iach **allenast** komma wedh hans clädhe. (SAOB, 1526)  
*may I only come PL his robe*  
 'may I **only** get to touch his robe'
- b. Iagh wil giffua som j begäre, giffuer migh **allenest** pighona til  
 hustru. (SAOB, 1541)  
*I will give as you require give me only maid-the for wife*  
 'I will give as you require, give me **only** the maid for wife'

Looking at the adverbial meanings of *allena* and *allenast*, we hereby can establish a crucial difference: *allenast* is used in the desiderative meaning very early and apparently quite frequently, whereas there are only few and late occurrences of desiderative *allena*. Since they otherwise share the same semantic features, it is likely that it is the desiderative meaning that makes the difference, eventually allowing the use of *allenast* as a conditional subordinator. This

strengthens the hypothesis that the desiderative meaning of *bara* was a prerequisite for the succeeding change into a conditional subordinator.

Regarding desiderative *allena*, it might be a case of influence from *allenast*; likewise, there are a few late instances of adversative *allenast* (SAOB, B 996) which perhaps can be explained as influence in the opposite direction. It would actually be surprising, I think, if all language users could sustain the fine syntactic and semantic nuances of *allenast* and *allena* without ever mixing them up.

## 5.2. *Blott*

The adjective *blott* was borrowed from Low German in the middle ages (Hellquist 1980: 81). In OSw it had meanings like 'naked' or 'defenseless' (Söderwall I:127), but in EMSw it could mean 'only, mere'. SAOB:s first example of this new meaning of the inflecting adjective is from 1572 (13. a). Some decades later, an adverbial *blott* shows up, also in the meaning 'only' (13. b), and in the early 18:th century, at the same time as conditional *bara* makes its first appearance, we find a conditional combination *blott att* (13. c). About half a century later, *blott* can be used as a bare conditional subordinator (13. d):

13. a. Aff sinne **blotta** nådh ... (SAOB, 1572)  
*of his mere mercy*  
'of his **mere** mercy ...'

- b. Stilleståndet hafwer han ... giordt .. **blott** fördhenskull, thet han .. icke förmåtte något emot oss at uthrätta. (SAOB, 1617).  
*armistice-the has he made only because that he not could anything against us acheive*  
 'the armistice has he caused **only** for the reason that he was not able to achieve anything against us'
- c. Jag kan förlåta et Fruentimmer, at det talar i tid och i otid, **blott at** det blir innom skrankorne af sin bur. (SAOB, 1733)  
*I can forgive a female that it speaks in time and untime only that it stays within bars-the of its cage*  
 'I can forgive a female that it speaks at all odd times of the day, **if only** it stays within the barriers of its cage'
- d. Han är nögd, **blott** han får detta, Modo hoc obtineat contentus est. (SAOB, 1773).  
*he is satisfied only he receives this*  
 'he is satisfied, **if only** he receives this'

Wijk-Andersson (1991:72) gives a resumé of the progress of *blott* during the 18:th century which closely follows SAOB.

The hypothesis that desiderative meaning somehow is necessary when adverbs belonging to this group of words change into conditional subordinators does not appear to be corroborated; the first examples in SAOB of adverbial desiderative *blott* are as late as 1795. Therefore desiderative *blott* can not have contributed to the rise of conditional *blott*, seemingly, since this is earlier. However, going back to Argus (from 1732) once again, one actually finds examples of both unambiguously desiderative (14. a) and conditional *blott* (14. b, c) which accordingly are older than the examples provided by SAOB:

14. a. Om jag **blott** woro snäll, jag swär wid spis och stuga, jag skull' til Stockholm dra och för Kung FREDRIC buga. (Argus)  
*if I only was clever I swear by stove and cottage I would to Stockholm go and for king Fredric bow*  
 'if I **only** was clever, I swear by stove and cottage, I would go to Stockholm and bow for king Fredric'
- b. Liksom det intet woro lika godt, hwad wägar man går, **blott** man får det man will. (Argus)  
*as it not was equally good which roads you go only you get what you want*  
 'as if it did not matter which ways you go, **if only** you get what you want'
- c. Stor sak med hwad wårdzlöshet et Testamente skrifs, **blott** det har något gott at innebära. (Argus)  
*big thing with which carelessness a will written-is only it has something good to bring*  
 'no matter if a will is written carelessly, **if only** it brings about something good'

It seems as some of the early crucial examples of *blott* have been overlooked by both SAOB and Wijk-Andersson; in Argus, we actually find both desiderative and conditional *blott*.

So, in one decade, 1730-1740, we find the first examples of desiderative *blott*, of conditional *blott att* and of conditional *bara*. As for my purposes, the change of *blott* does actually not contradict the hypothesis in consideration, but nor is it strengthened, since the *blott*-variants cannot be ordered chronologically. *Blott* and *bara* apparently change more or less simultaneously.

### 5.3. *Enbart* and *endast*

*Enbart* is, according to SAOB (E 583) the adverbial form of the adjective *enbar*. The adjective is, in its turn, originally a compound of the numeral *en* ('one') and the adjective *bar*, which of course also was the origin of *bara*. Like the other grams in this group, the adjective *enbar* developed an exclusive meaning 'only' (15. a), and an adverbial, in the form *enbart*, was used with the same meaning in the end of the 19:th century (15. b):

15. a. [...] at de således aldrig Brödet **enbart** bekommit. (SAOB, 1739)  
*[...] that they thus never bread-the only had*  
'[...] that they thus never had **only** bread'
- b. Det är väl troligt, att **enbart** förbittringen mot den mäktige gunstlingen hade vållat en fejd inom landet. (SAOB, 1876)  
*it is probably likely that only resentment-the against the powerful favourite-the had caused a feud in nation-the*  
'it is plausible, that **only** the resentment against the powerful favourite would have caused a feud within the nation'

No other significant meanings of *enbart* has evolved (cf SAG 4, §59), and the word has never been used as a subordinator.

*Endast* is also the offspring of an adjective, *ende* (SAOB, E 588), in the same pattern as *barast* and *allenast*. The original meaning of *ende* is probably 'alone', but as one of its submeanings *ende* meant 'only'. This was the basic meaning of the adverb *endast* in the 18:th century (16. a). But, in contrast to *enbart*, *endast* developed further and could later be used in exclamations and conditional

clauses to strengthen the element of desire – it became a desiderative adverb (16. b, c). In the end of the 18:th century, we finally find *endast* in use as a conditional subordinator (16. d):

16. a. The.. (vilja) nu blifwa Gudz lag frie, och **endast** slå sig vppå  
 werldzligheter. (SAOB, 1709).  
*they (want) now become God's law free and only engage refl.in wordlinesses*  
 'they now (want) to be free from God's law, and **only** indulge in wordly matters'
- b. De lemna Eders (Kungl. Höghet) gerna i skeps-brott, när de **endast** kunna  
 rädda sig sjelfva. (SAOB, 1754)  
*they leave your (royal highness) gladly in ship-wreck when they only can save*  
*themselves*  
 'they gladly leave your royal highness in a shipwreck, when they **only** may rescue  
 themselves'
- c. At **endast** den grymme sit lif velat spara! (SAOB, 1788)  
*that only the cruel his life wanted to-spare*  
 'if the cruel one **only** had wanted to spare his life!'
- d. Vi hafve intet så ondt om Patrioter **endast** de hinna med blifva  
 kända. (SAOB, 1781)  
*we have not so PL PL patriots only they manage PL become known*  
 'we have no shortage of patriots, **if only** they get time to become known'

Like the pair *allena/allenast*, *enbart* and *endast* display important semantic and syntactic differences, although their basic meanings were very similar; only *endast* developed into a desiderative adverb and eventually into a conditional subordinator. Hence the decisive factor again seems to be desiderative meaning,

and the chronology of the changes furthermore support the idea that desiderative meaning predates, and maybe enables, conditional meaning. But *endast* could not have been a trigger for conditional *bara*, since this function of *endast* is about half a century younger than conditional *bara*. *Endast* is now defunct as a conditional subordinator; the latest example in SAOB is dated 1910.

## 6. A sketch of the grammaticalization of *bara*

### 6.1. A summary of the proposed development

The source of conditional *bara* is an adjectival *bar* meaning 'naked'. The adjective acquired the exclusive meaning 'only' (change 1 in figure 1. below), and formed the morphological base for the adverb *bara* (change 2). The adverb *bara* is then used as a sentence adverb (change 3). About a century later a desiderative adverbial *bara* and a conditional subordinating *bara* appear simultaneously. The desiderative adverb is, I argue, the result of a reinterpretation of exclusive *bara*. The reinterpretation was made possible by the use of exclusive *bara* as a sentence adverb in desiderative clauses. Then desiderative *bara* in turn gave rise to conditional *bara*. The hypothesis that desiderativity, which entails hypotheticality, is a necessary step in the change process is strengthened when semantically similar conditionals such as *allenast*, *blott* and *endast* are studied; these grams had all developed into desiderative adverbs before they turned into conditionals, whereas *allena* and *enbart* neither became desiderative nor conditional. Desiderative *bara* may furthermore occur in conditional clauses, but also in other types of clauses that often are interpreted as

conditional: imperatives and exclamatives. The entire development of *bara* is illustrated below:

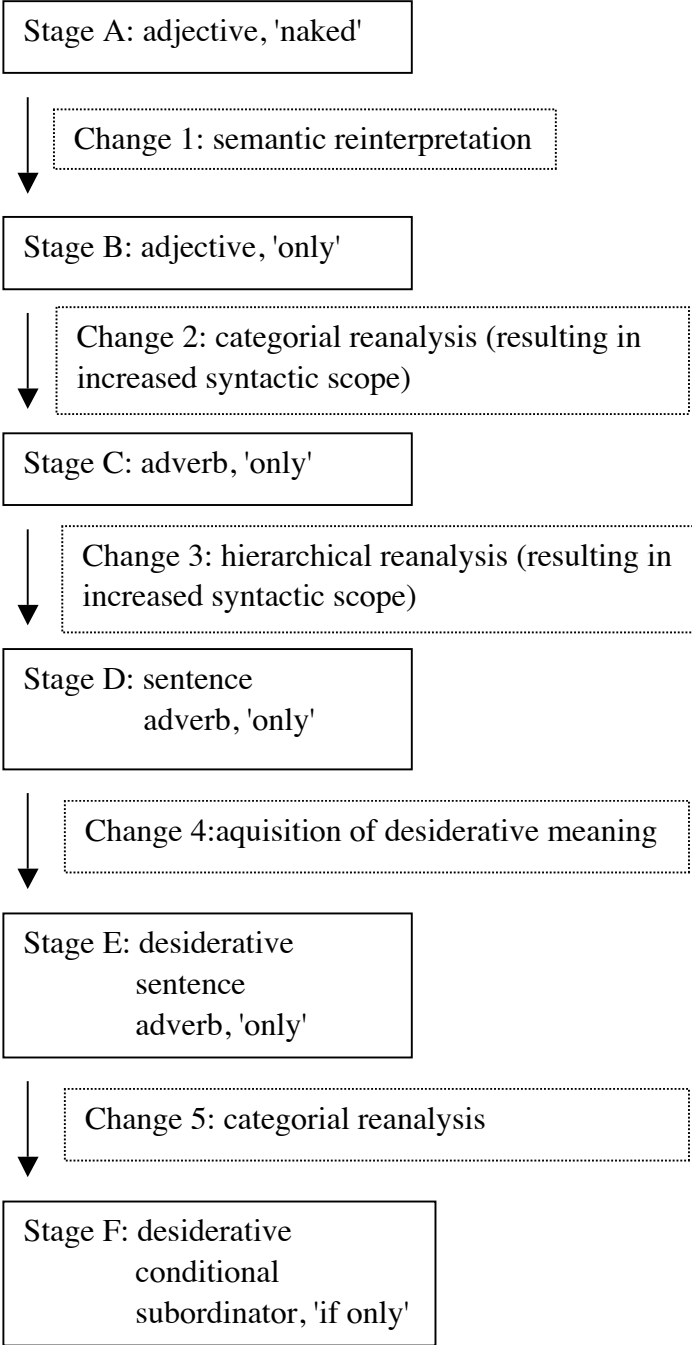


Figure 1. *The evolution of bara.*

The five changes that has turned the adjective *bara* into a conditional subordinator are of different types: two are semantic and three are syntactic. The entire chain of change can, I think, only be understood properly if both types of change are considered.

## 6.2. The evolution of conditional *bara* as an instance of grammaticalization

In the introduction, it was pointed out that *bara* as a conditional subordinator conveys both desiderativity and a sense of explicit sufficiency; given the history of *bara*, as it is sketched here, it is plausible that the basic meaning of the adjective ('bare, uncovered') still is immanent in the conditional subordinator as the more abstract meaning 'no more than'. A conditional clause with *bara* (*Bara katten jamar så vaknar Kalle* – 'If only the cat miaows then Kalle wakes up') can be paraphrased as *No more than A is required in order to B*, a clear indication of a remaining streak of negativity. We thus find that conditional *bara* displays both semantic retention and source determination (Bybee et al 1994:chapter 1).

As for the desiderative feature of conditional *bara*, it is likely that this lingers on from the desiderative sentence adverb *bara*; this meaning has then evolved by pragmatic inferencing (Hopper & Traugott 1993:chapter 5); *bara* has acquired desiderative meaning by appearing in desiderative clauses. This meaning has then been passed on to the subordinating *bara*.

Furthermore, the chain of change also includes abstraction (Heine et al 1991:48), subjectification (Traugott 1980, 1982, 1989, 1995), semantic bleaching (Sweetser 1988), increase of scope (Tabor & Traugott 1998) and structural simplification (Roberts & Roussou 1999). All in all, the semantic changes of *bara* fits quite well into the frame of grammaticalization as it is

formulated in standard grammaticalization theory (Heine et al 1991, Hopper & Traugott 1993, Bybee et al 1994, Lehmann 1995 etc), whereas the structural development involves increase of scope rather than the opposite (as suggested by Givón 1979:209, Hopper & Traugott 1993:7, Lehmann 1995). This is quite natural, given that subordinators, unlike clitics and affixes, are grammatical items with wide structural scope.

However, the chain of changes really seems to consist of a series of independent changes, that are triggered by various factors. If this is the case, then it might be inadequate to consider the entire chain as one prolonged process of grammaticalization. But in a wider perspective, it is possible to see some form of mechanism at work throughout the entire process, I think. Let us turn to the changes of *bara* once more.

The first step was semantic ('uncovered' to 'only'), and I have above suggested that these meanings are overlapping and in a sense synonymous. Still, they are in a way separate, and each one may be strengthened or cancelled by context – in other words, the attributive adjective *bara* was, and still is, vague. However, the following change (a reanalysis from adjective to adverb) dissolved the vagueness, since the adverb *bara* can not mean 'naked', but solely 'only'. In its new function, as an adverb, *bara* could be used to underline not only words and phrases, but also events and eventually also sentences. Still, these syntactic alternatives were not visible. The string *Jag kan bara se Kalle* ('I can only see Kalle') is structurally ambiguous (under the assumption that the differences in scope are results of underlying structural differences). When *bara* appears in this linear position, it must be assigned one of a number of possible structural roles. The reanalysis that blocked the vagueness of *bara* thus eventually resulted in syntactic ambiguity.

In some cases the adverb *bara* was used in sentences that expressed desires (imperatives, exclamations etc). Using MSw examples, the further development is illustrated in (17.):

17. a. **Bara** Kalle kunde komma!  
'if only Kalle could come'
- b. **Bara** Kalle kunde komma, då skulle vi kunna börja äta!  
'if only Kalle would come, then we could start eating'
- c. **Bara** Kalle kunde komma så skulle vi kunna börja äta.  
'if only Kalle would come then we could start eating'

The semantic difference between (17. b) and (17. c) is unclear; it is similar to the difference between 'no more than p is required to q' and 'if only p then q', which is quite hard to pinpoint exactly. To me, this is again a question of vagueness – the meanings are overlapping but still somehow different, and the context is crucial for the interpretation. The vagueness allowed for another reanalysis, I think, which resulted in the MSw conditional subordinator *bara*.<sup>2</sup>

The evolution of *bara* can thus be seen as a chain of changes that consists of semantic and syntactic steps that are dependent on either semantic vagueness or syntactic ambiguity. Consequently, one can assume that vague and/or ambiguous grams may be rather unstable in a diachronic perspective, and that neither the structural nor the semantic features of grammaticalized grams can be

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<sup>2</sup> Bjerre's (1935) argumentation concerning conditional interpretations of OSw temporal subordinators seem to suggest that vagueness was an important factor also in these interpretations.

neglected in the search for the reasons why the grams did change. This view on the chain of changes is illustrated in figure 2. below:

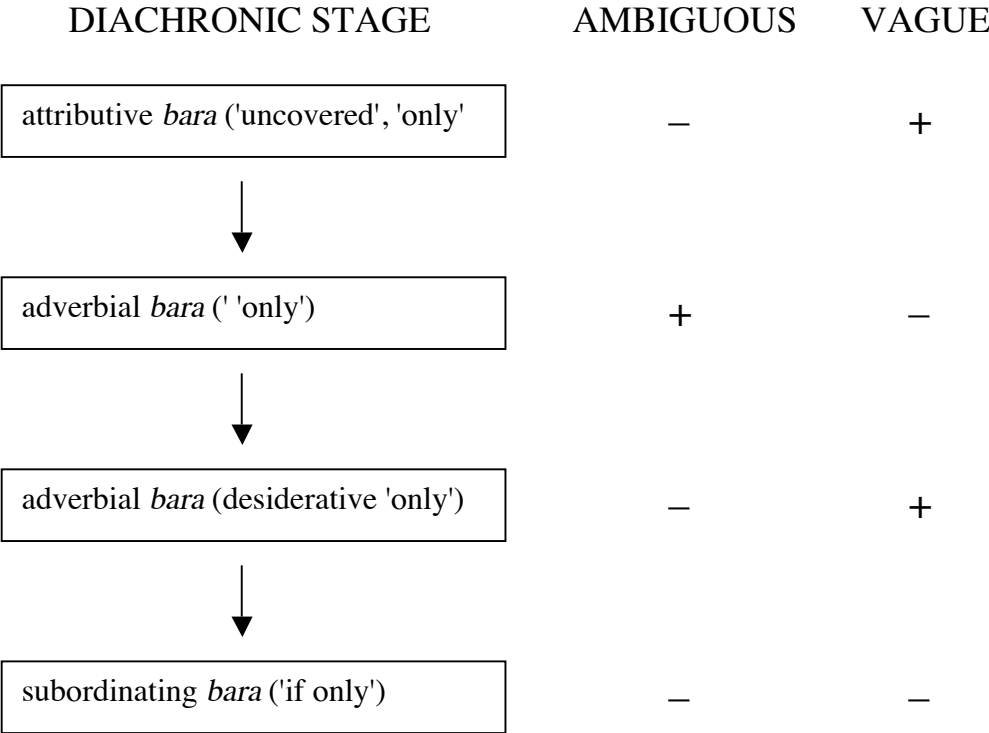


Figure 2. The changes of *bara* seen as syntactic/semantic interaction.

This model also entails that gradual semantic shifts may accompany non-gradual syntactic shifts in diachronic language change. A hearer/child may involuntary reanalyze a vague gram and/or assign new meaning to a gram that occurs in an ambiguous structure, as they in discourse interpret their linguistic input to the best of their knowledge. Furthermore, one of the main grammatical aspects of any gram (either the semantic or the syntactic properties) will remain unaltered in such stepwise changes, forming a link to the previous stage. This is a view on grammaticalization in which both the formal and the functional approach to language change are essential, and it therefore underlines the gist of van

Kemenade's (1999:998) argumentation. She points out that "[...] while the approaches do not share too many background assumptions, they complement rather than contradict each other in important ways". It also reintroduces problem solving (cf Heine et al 1991:29) as a possible meta-cause for grammaticalization, although in a quite new meaning.

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