

# Connecting Grammaticalisation

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*John Benjamins Publishing Company*

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Amsterdam / Philadelphia



The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Nørgård-Sørensen, Jens.

Connecting grammaticalisation / Jens Nørgård-Sørensen, Lars Heltoft, Lene Schøsler.

p. cm. (Studies in Functional and Structural Linguistics, ISSN 0165-7712 ; v. 65)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Grammar, Comparative and general--Grammaticalization. 2. Structural linguistics. I.

Heltoft, Lars. II. Schøsler, Lene, 1946- III. Title.

P299.G73N675 2011

415--dc23

2011029817

ISBN 978 90 272 1575 8 (Hb ; alk. paper)

ISBN 978 90 272 8413 6 (Eb)

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John Benjamins Publishing Co. · P.O. Box 36224 · 1020 ME Amsterdam · The Netherlands

John Benjamins North America · P.O. Box 27519 · Philadelphia PA 19118-0519 · USA

## Connecting Grammaticalisation

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### **Volume 65**

Connecting Grammaticalisation

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# Introduction

In the present book we offer an overall view of grammaticalisation (grammatical status and grammatical change) radically different from the standard view(s) centering around what is called the cline of grammaticality. Morphology is the traditional core area of grammar, and the standard view basically complies with tradition in terms of the background assumption that grammaticalisation processes are directed towards morphological status, or if already there, towards enhanced morphological status.

Given that our subject is grammatical change, this traditional focus is indeed a narrow one. Important insights and knowledge have been downgraded, in particular:

1. The great majority of morphological changes are changes from one morphological system to another. Although morphological systems can be expanded or reduced and can certainly undergo typological changes, such processes are normally not enhancement processes, but rather changes from one obligatory system to another.
2. Grammar, of course, comprises constructional syntax and word order systems, and much of our effort in the first three chapters is devoted to constructions and word order as interacting but discernible parts of grammar. However, we do not think that constructional systems and word order systems are generally less grammaticalised than morphological systems. Strikingly, not even the oft-quoted Meillet seems to have held such views of grammar (see Chapter 2).

Grammar is a complex sign system, and by definition grammatical change will always comprise semantic change. We see no point in claiming modular organisation of grammar. There is no autonomous syntactic module and no isolated morphological component. Nor do we see any point in binding up syntax with linearity from the outset, but we treat syntax as construction syntax and word order as topology, since we view both as sign systems in their own right.

These views are presented and unfolded in Chapters 1–3. At present, we emphasise the main idea only.

- Morphology, topology and constructional syntax are subsystems of the overall grammatical sign system. What unites them is their paradigmatic organisation.
- All of grammar is organised in closed sets of alternations (paradigms), and our key claim is that the traditional concept of an inflexional paradigm can be generalised as a structuring principle of word order systems and constructional systems also.

- All paradigms structure sign systems and must be understood as packages of content and expression. As such, they are language specific.
- Grammatical change takes the form of grammation, regrammation and degrammation of paradigms (Andersen 2006a).

This general view of grammar is presented in Chapter 1–3, in a perspective that is both synchronic and diachronic. To say what has changed into what, we need synchronic descriptions of grammatical phenomena, and any scenario of a process of grammatical change presupposes synchronic and panchronic analyses of the elements involved.

Much of our background originates in functional European linguistics, in particular Danish Functional Linguistics (Engberg-Pedersen, Fortescue, Harder, Heltoft & Jakobsen (1996), Harder (1996)), hence our focus on semantic and pragmatic issues. Danish functional linguistics shares its interest in usage with American functional linguistics, but it has another foot firmly placed in Saussurean European structuralism with its focus on the relation between content and expression (Jakobson, Hjelmslev). For recent examples of this discussion, see Boye and Harder (2007) and Heltoft (2010). Both articles discuss and exemplify the relation between usage and structure from the stance that – in the coinage of Boye and Harder (2007: 570) – “structure is distilled out of, but simultaneously presupposed by, usage”. In addition to this, Heltoft’s focus is on (esp. paradigmatic) structure as a “measure against which we can identify usage processes symptomatic of a change and make sense of them” (2010: 161).

Where models and views of grammatical change and of linguistic change in general are concerned, we are deeply indebted to Henning Andersen, see the reference list.

Our emphasis is on the generalised concept of a paradigm, its structuring role in grammar and its importance for a theory of linguistic change. In this lies what we see as our own main contribution to the subject. Paradigmatic structure is common to morphology, topology (word order) and constructional syntax; all grammatical changes involve paradigmatic restructuring.

The book endeavours one more theoretical step, however tentative, namely the claim that, on the basis of our concept of a paradigm, we need a concept of connecting grammaticalisation. Morphological, topological and constructional paradigms very often connect to form complex paradigms, so-called hyperparadigms (developed in Christensen 2007, written in Danish), and grammaticalisation processes include the formation, restructuring and dismantling of such complex paradigms. Although the idea is relatively simple, we have chosen to introduce this concept little by little in Chapters 1–3, and to return to it in principle in a short separate Chapter 4, which may serve as a platform from where to identify and explore examples of connecting grammaticalisation.

A possible alternative coining of ‘connecting grammaticalisation’ would be a sequential one in which chains of grammations, regrammations and degrammations

are seen as one connected process, in the sense that change A is a precondition for B, which again is a precondition for C and D, etc. Such analyses need explications of the concept of preconditioning, since, for instance, most attempts to link two changes A and B as universally conditioned have up till now been easy to disprove empirically.

The layout of the book is then as follows:

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 present our view on the paradigmatic organisation of grammar: the concept of a paradigm, applied to (1) morphology and morphological change, to (2) topology and word order change, and (3) to constructions and constructional change. In 4 our view of connecting grammaticalisation is presented and exemplified.

Chapters 5–7 are separate studies by the individual authors, each of whom makes connecting grammaticalisation a central point. Chapter 5, “Patterns of connecting grammaticalisation in Russian: syntax, animacy, and aspect” (by Jens Nørgård-Sørensen), is an extensive study of aspect and case in Russian. It is claimed that Russian aspect and animacy developed as connected changes, their semantic organisation being related in an interesting way. Chapter 6, “Word order change as grammaticalisation. Paradigmatic structure and change in Scandinavian.” (by Lars Heltoft), is a study of Scandinavian verb second and its semantic and syntactic change from the Middle Ages to the present day, especially of word order paradigms and their hyper-paradigmatic organisation. And finally, Chapter 7, “Scenarios of grammatical change in Romance languages” (by Lene Schøsler), deals with the reinterpretation of the Latin case system in the Romance languages, particularly in French, and its integration in constructional paradigms.

The languages studied are Slavic (mainly Russian), Germanic (Mainland Scandinavian, esp. Danish), and Romance (with a focus on French).



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PART I

**Grammaticalisation  
and paradigmatic structure**



## CHAPTER 1

# Morphology

### 1. Grammaticalisation and morphology

Grammaticalisation studies were closely associated with morphology at an early stage. These studies often cite Meillet (1965 [1912]) for having introduced the term *grammaticalisation*, with reference to the observation that many morphological affixes developed from lexical units. However, the fundamental insight behind this observation is much older than the intensified grammaticalisation studies of recent years and, as will soon be clear, we do not take the idea that “today’s morphology is yesterday’s syntax” (Givón 1971:413) as covering the field of grammaticalisation in any coherent or exhaustive way.

As already mentioned in the introduction, our idea of grammaticalisation by definition includes paradigmatic restructuring. As a simple and hopefully clarifying introduction to this idea and to our approach in general, we shall begin by considering a fairly transparent example of a change in the Russian case system.

In Common Slavic, as reflected in the oldest Slavic texts of Bulgarian (Old Church Slavonic) and Russian origin, there were a number of noun declensions with different desinences. For the genitive singular the *o*-stems took the desinence *-a*; the *ǫ*-stems took the desinence *-u*. Before eventually ceasing to exist as a separate declension the *ǫ*-stems exerted a remarkable influence on the *o*-stems. The *o*-stems took in several *ǫ*-stem desinences, one of which was the genitive singular *-u*. Consequently, *o*-stem nouns started appearing with a genitive singular *-u*, along with the inherited *-a*, cf. (1).

(1) Genitive singular (Common Slavic – as reflected in Old Russian)

<i>o</i> -stem forms (inherited)	<i>ǫ</i> -stem forms (new)
<i>polon-a</i> ‘prisoners’ (collective)	<i>polon-u</i>
<i>sneg-a</i> ‘snow’	<i>sneg-u</i>

This is a process of analogy, i.e. a simple change of expression not affecting the content. Though there is evidence that even in the oldest texts the two desinences were not randomly distributed (Šachmatov 1957:240–45), the process should be recognised as analogical in its origin, allowing the two genitive singular desinences to occur as variants, possibly stylistically distributed, in connection with a number of *o*-stem nouns.



The two forms continue to exist side by side in Modern Russian, but with a semantic distribution unknown to Old Russian. In Modern Russian, mass nouns of the 1st declension masculine (the former masculine *o*-stems) appear with two different genitive singular desinences, cf. (2).

- (2) *kačestvo čaj-a*                      *stakan čaj-u/čaj-a*  
 quality tea-GEN.SG                      glass tea-GEN.SG  
 ‘the quality of the tea’                      ‘a glass of tea’

The standard genitive singular desinence for the 1st declension masculine is *-a*, cf. *čaj-a*. An additional desinence *-u* is used for mass nouns, cf. the genitive-attribute *čaj-u* as a possible alternative to *čaj-a* in (2). Under specific circumstances the genitive, and in particular the *u*-genitive appears as the direct object (argument 2, henceforth A2) along with the accusative, cf. (3).

- (3) a. *vypit’ čaj*  
       drink tea-ACC.SG  
       ‘drink tea/the tea’  
       b. *vypit’ čaj-u*  
       drink tea-GEN.SG  
       ‘drink (some) tea’

As appears from the tentative translations of the examples, the desinence *-u*, being restricted to mass nouns, expresses (indefinite) quantity. This is why in its attributive function it combines only with nouns denoting a measurement of quantity (cf. in (2) *stakan* ‘glass’), but not with nouns without this property (cf. in (2) *kačestvo* ‘quality’). Further, in the A2 slot the *u*-form unequivocally refers to an indefinite quantity – as opposed to the unmarked accusative. Thus, while still included in the general case paradigm, the two genitive forms constitute a subparadigm of the Modern Russian case system, cf. Table 1.

**Table 1.** Modern Russian: The genitive *-a/-u* distinction

**Domain:** Mass nouns, 1st decl.gen.sg.masc.

**Frame:** Quantification

Expression	Content	Markedness
<i>-a</i>	neutral	unmarked
<i>-u</i>	quantified	marked

This paradigm is productive within its domain of mass nouns.<sup>1</sup> This appears from a number of loan words having entered Russian throughout the last two to three

1. On productivity, see Section 9 below.