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Grammaticalization and Language Change

New reflections

Edited by
Kristin Davidse
Tine Breban
Lieselotte Brems
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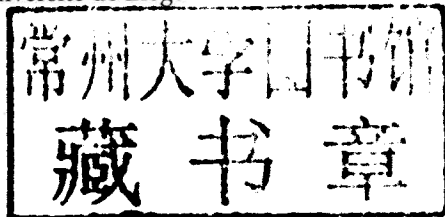
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In collaboration with

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Kristin Davidse, Tine Breban, Lieselotte Brems, Tanja Mortelmans

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Introduction

New reflections on the sources, outcomes, defining features and motivations of grammaticalization

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1. Preliminaries

It is unquestionable that the study of grammaticalization and related processes of change has had an enormous impact on the recent linguistic scene. Grammaticalization research in the broad sense has created a meeting ground for approaches as varied as typology, language acquisition, comparative and diachronic study, synchronic language description, usage-based and corpus-based description, and discourse approaches. In about a quarter of a century, it has changed the general assumptions of language *description*, putting awareness of change at the centre of interest, rather than reserving it to specialized historical linguistics studies. Diachronically, it has broadened our ideas of *sources* for grammatical elements and the *pathways* involved in developing them. Importantly, awareness of the ubiquity of grammaticalization processes has also woken us up to the fact that, from a synchronic point of view, the grammatical resources of any language are much more extensive than generally recognized in reference grammars. For instance, as observed by Diewald (2010) for German, multiple processes of auxiliarization of periphrastic verbal expressions have extended the auxiliary systems exponentially, but “in mainstream descriptions of the tense and mood systems... most authors follow the tradition of integrating some periphrastic constructions while excluding others without further mention, let alone convincing arguments for the chosen selection” (Diewald 2010: 29). The importance of *principled criteria* for the identification of grammaticalization paths and their outcomes is also reflected in *theory formation*. Lehmann’s (1985) parameters and Hopper’s (1991) principles form the solid core of countless case studies, and further theoretical reflections endeavour to grasp the essence and all the implications of grammaticalization in volumes such as Heine, Claudi & Hünemeyer (1991), Traugott & Heine (1991), Hopper & Traugott (2003 [1993]), Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca

(1994), Giacolone Ramat & Hopper (1998), Fischer, Rosenbach & Stein (2000), Traugott & Dasher (2002), Wischer & Diewald (2002), Roberts & Roussou (2003), Bisang, Himmelmann & Wiemer (2004), Fischer, Norde & Peridon (2004), van Gelderen (2004, 2011), Brinton & Traugott (2005), Fischer (2007), López-Couso & Seoane (2008), Seoane & López-Couso (2008), Davidse, Vandelanotte & Cuyckens (2010), Stathi, Gehweiler & König (2010), Van linden, Verstraete & Davidse (2010), Traugott & Trousdale (2010), Narrog & Heine (2011).

However, as is the case with many fashionable topics, grammaticalization research risks to become the victim of its own success. In *empirical* studies, grammaticalization, and related processes such as subjectification, are sometimes posited without *systematic application of recognition criteria* (see Norde this volume). If attention is restricted to pragmatic and semantic aspects, without sound formal evidence, there is a danger of vacuity, as cautioned by van Gelderen (2004) and Fischer (2007), amongst others. Another potential weakness is the blanket characterization of complex and composite changes as cases of grammaticalization, without eye for the smaller processes and mechanisms of change of which they consist (Roberts & Roussou 2003, van Gelderen 2011). In this context, the ongoing debate about the role of reanalysis and analogy (e.g. Fischer 2007, 2011; Traugott & Trousdale 2010, Traugott 2011) is a healthy sign of critical sense. So is the increased interest in lexicalization, which shares many features with grammaticalization and is often entwined with it in actual changes (e.g. Wischer 2000; Brinton 2002; Lehmann 2002; Himmelmann 2004; Brinton & Traugott 2005). This necessitates a clearer *delineation of the essence of both grammaticalization and lexicalization*. At the same time, researchers are forced to question their views on the *distinction between grammatical and lexical elements*. Finally, researchers should beware of invoking grammaticalization and other general processes of change too readily as ultimate *explanatory principles*. Instead, they should reflect on what these processes can and cannot explain (Campbell 2001; Abraham 2005, 2010) and meet the challenge of *explaining grammaticalization* itself.

This volume is a collection of contributions by authors from the grammaticalization research tradition, who are aware of the challenges just outlined that are upon them. In confronting these challenges, they go back to basics, to a deepened understanding of the *defining features* (e.g. Brinton, De Mulder & Lamiroy, Diewald & Smirnova, Norde, Ronan, Waltereit). They investigate *sources* and *paths of change* that have been largely overlooked so far and also focus strongly on the target areas, or *outcomes*, of these paths (e.g. Brinton, Diessel, Eckardt, Melis & Flores, Trousdale, Vázquez Rozas & García Salido). Before turning to their main theoretical and descriptive contributions in this volume, we will sketch the general thinking, as well as the different approaches, within the tradition they are situated in.

2. Definitions of grammaticalization and lexicalization

In the last thirty years, a number of *definitions of grammaticalization* have been given, which highlight different aspects of the process. Despite the refinements and additions offered, many of them ultimately draw on the two seminal, but quite distinct, definitions of Meillet and Kuryłowicz. For Meillet (1912) grammaticalization involved “[l]’*attribution du caractère grammatical à un mot jadis autonome*” (the attribution of grammatical character to a previously autonomous word). Kuryłowicz (1965) proposed that “[g]rammaticalization consists in the increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical or from less grammatical to a more grammatical status [...]”. Whereas Meillet opposes grammatical character to autonomy, Kuryłowicz contrasts lexical with grammatical status. Up until this day, these two contrasts, appearing intuitively simple, seem to have eluded clear definitions and continue to cloud our views on which processes of change should be considered grammaticalization and which should not.

Thus, many scholars in grammaticalization studies have sought to distinguish *grammaticalization from lexicalization*, the diachronic process giving rise to new lexical items, e.g. Kuryłowicz (1965), Lehmann (1989), Moreno Cabrera (1998), Wischer (2000, 2011), Brinton (2002), Lehmann (2002), Himmelmann (2004), Trousdale (2008a), and the book-length study of Brinton & Traugott (2005) (see also Lightfoot 2011). Himmelmann (2004) has observed that grammaticalization and lexicalization can be defined either as distinct *processes* or in terms of their *outcomes*, i.e. the creation of new grammatical versus lexical items. However, the latter approach can only work if we have distinctive conceptions of grammar and lexicon and this is not straightforward for several types of items. For instance, are derivational morphemes such as the suffix *-ment* in French *clairement*, grammatical formatives even though they result in the creation of new lexical items (Himmelmann 2004; Wischer 2011)? Should complex prepositions and conjunctions such as *instead of*, and *all the same*, be classified as grammar because the new words do not belong to the major categories verb, noun, adjective or are they merely new lexicon or maybe both (see e.g. Ramat 1992: 553–554; Schwenter & Traugott 1995; Tabor & Traugott 1998: 244–253; Brinton 2002: 69–70; Lehmann 2002: 9–10; Traugott 2003a: 636; Brinton & Traugott 2005: 64–65)?

Recently, Boye & Harder (2009, 2012) have formulated a proposal to *distinctively define lexical from grammatical items*, and by extension lexicalization from grammaticalization, by correlating their different discourse status with distinct formal behaviour. They propose to define grammar as “coded secondariness” (Boye & Harder 2009: 33). The corresponding concepts used to identify lexical items are those of ‘addressability’ and ‘primariness’. Boye & Harder (2007) first applied these notions to distinguish lexical and grammatical uses of complement-taking

predicates such as *I think*. In their lexical use, they describe an instance of thinking, e.g. *Other days I think "It's just not fair"* (Vandelanotte 2009: 296). In their grammaticalized use, they express evidential or modal qualifications of an assertion, e.g. *Commander Dalglish writes poetry, I think* (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 208). Hopper & Traugott (2003: 207–209) had treated the process of change leading from lexical to grammatical uses as nucleus-margin reversal. According to Hopper & Traugott (2003: 208), formal changes that may accompany this grammaticalization process are: loss of complementizer *that*, less stress on the parenthetical than on the main verb, and flexibility of placement of the parenthetical. These formal properties, however, do not appear to systematically distinguish lexical from grammatical uses, as, for instance, grammaticalized uses may still have complementizer *that* (Shank, Plevoets & Cuyckens *forthc.*). In proposing the functional-formal notions of addressability and coded secondariness, central concerns of Boye & Harder (2007) are to “maintain [...] the role of structural [...] subordination” (2007: 569), while developing linguistic tests that systematically pick up on the different discourse status of the elements in question. Information given in discourse may be the primary predication, i.e. the most important information of an utterance, or a secondary predication, which serves only to support the primary one. The criterion to distinguish between these two readings is ‘addressability’. If a clause with complement-taking predicate is the primary point of the utterance, it will be ‘addressable’ by such linguistic tests as a *really*-query (*Do you really think...*) and a tag or *do*-probe (*Do you?*). If, by contrast, the clause with complement-taking predicate has the grammatical value of qualifying the following clause, which forms the main assertion, it is the latter which will allow *really*-queries, tags and *do*-probes. Qualifying *I think* resists these tests because it is not addressable as the main point of the utterance. It is, or has become, ‘secondary’ in the discourse in that it functions, as is typical of grammatical elements, as an operator or modifier of the proposition.

Boye & Harder (2012) extend non-addressability and coded secondariness to all grammatical and grammaticalized elements. Elements with grammatical status are generally characterized by their ‘ancillary’ status vis-à-vis other linguistic expressions and by secondary discursive status. Grammaticalization is the change that gives rise to such expressions and is “functionally motivated by predominant use [...] of elements in situations where they have such secondary status” (Boye & Harder 2009: 32). Non-addressability and secondariness characterize a grammatical element independently from process features such as entrenchment and provide a tool to assess the grammatical status of each individual use. At this point, Boye & Harder have applied their analysis only to the characterization of grammaticalization. It will be interesting to see whether their proposals will allow them to also offer a principled characterization of the process of lexicalization in the future.

An example of what Himmelmann (2004) referred to as the *process-approach* towards the definitions of lexicalization and grammaticalization is developed in Brinton & Traugott (2005). They point out that conceiving of grammaticalization and lexicalization in terms of their outcomes leads to another complication, viz. the status of *degrammaticalization*. As degrammaticalization involves the development from grammatical to lexical material, it should in an outcome-approach be considered a subtype of lexicalization, see amongst others Kuryłowicz (1975 [1965]), Lehmann (1989), Ramat (1992, 2001), Hagege (1993), Giacalone Ramat (1998), Moreno Cabrera (1998), Wischer (2000), Brinton (2002), Lehmann (2002), Van der Auwera (2002), Himmelmann (2004), Norde (2009, 2011), Brinton (this volume). In their attempt to disentangle the three different processes, Brinton & Traugott (2005) argue that the basis for the conflicting analyses lies in the problematic definition of lexicalization. They hold that the broad definition ‘adoption of an item in the lexicon’ in fact encompasses grammaticalization, degrammaticalization as well as lexicalization. Instead, they propose a new analysis in terms of shared and distinguishing features: grammaticalization is, in contrast to lexicalization, constrained by a number of specific processes, such as decategorialization, bleaching, subjectification, increased frequency and productivity, and typological generalization (Brinton & Traugott 2005: 145). Norde (2009, this volume) proposes a similar process-oriented definition of degrammaticalization.

These process-oriented definitions chime in with a conception of grammaticalization as a *composite* process. As Diewald & Smirnova (2010: 98) put it, grammaticalization is epiphenomenal, in the sense that it is of a “composite nature”, consisting of a variety of member processes. Moreover, as argued by several scholars, these component processes are not unique to grammaticalization. Neither in its working nor its motivations is grammaticalization a single process. Traugott (1989) holds that grammaticalization is not distinct from other types of semantic change, and results from a small number of broader tendencies that govern both grammatical and lexical change. Bybee (2010: 112) notes that as grammaticalization is caused by “domain-general processes”, i.e. cognitive processes not restricted to language, it is inherently epiphenomenal. In accordance with these observations, Haspelmath (1999: 1043) proffers that the view that grammaticalization is conceived of as “a distinct process,” “an encapsulated phenomenon, governed by its own set of laws,” has been attributed wrongly to mainstream grammaticalization studies. Lehmann (2002 [1982]: vii) has always stressed that grammaticalization involves a number of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic processes. These may, but need not, constitute grammaticalization. According to Traugott & Heine (1991: 9), reanalysis, analogy, metaphor and metonymy are all “mechanisms that make change possible, but none are restricted to grammaticalization”. Is Joseph (2001: 22) right then in claiming that the development of

grammatical forms can be described without once making reference to ‘grammaticalization’, relying on well-understood concepts such as analogy or phonological change? Diewald & Smirnova (2010:98) reply to this often-raised question:

It is not enough to know the individual mechanisms, because none of them is confined to grammaticalization. They can all be involved in other processes of language change. Only in their interaction do they make up a gradual and directed path that leads to the evolution of grammatical forms. [...] Consequently, the distinctive and unique feature of grammaticalization is generally seen in its particular combination and serialization of several processes and stages, which – among other things – are reflected in grammaticalization scales and paths and complex scenarios of successive contexts and constructions.

Grammaticalization, then, is a generalization that overarches the convergence of certain processes towards a common goal. It is the task of grammaticalization research to *identify the combinations of processes* that make up cases of grammaticalization as well as to *identify its distinctive outcomes*.

3. Recognition criteria of grammaticalization

From the early days of grammaticalization research on, scholars have tried to define the component processes underlying grammaticalization, in order to apply them as *recognition criteria* to actual case studies of language change. After thirty years, Lehmann (2002 [1982]:vii) still stands as an authoritative, though not unchallenged (see below), definition of the basic parameters of grammaticalization. In his view, grammaticalization is a composite process in which an unconstrained lexical expression changes into a grammatical formative subject to the rules of grammar. Even though this definition is reminiscent of Kuryłowicz, the parameters that Lehmann proposes characterize grammaticalization elaborate Meillet’s idea of grammaticalization as loss of autonomy. Grammaticalization affects the degree of freedom with which a linguistic sign can be used in terms of three principal aspects: weight, cohesion, and variability (Lehmann 1985:3). As all linguistic signs function on both a paradigmatic and a syntagmatic axis, the three aspects do too. On the paradigmatic axis, weight encompasses the *integrity* of a sign, i.e. its semantic, phonological and morphological size. On this axis, cohesion stands for *paradigmaticity*, which is “the degree to which [a sign] enters a paradigm, is integrated into it and dependent on it” (Lehmann 2002 [1982]: 110). *Paradigmatic variability*, finally, captures the possibility of using one sign in place of another. On the syntagmatic axis, weight is the structural *scope* of a sign, “the structural size of the construction it helps to form [...] (which, for

many purposes, may be regarded as its constituent structure level)” (Lehmann 2002 [1982]: 128). Syntagmatic cohesion is *bondedness*, the degree to which the sign is connected to other signs in the same syntagm (which may vary from juxtaposition to cliticization and affixation). Finally, *syntagmatic variability* is the ease with which a sign can take up different positions relative to other constituents that it has a relation to. This yields six parameters which provide “operational criteria for the establishment and justification of special grammaticalization scales” (Lehmann 1985: 4), given in Table 1.

Table 1. Lehmann’s parameters

	Paradigmatic	Syntagmatic
Weight	Integrity	Scope
Cohesion	Paradigmaticity	Bondedness
Variability	Substitutability	Positional flexibility

As these parameters are only properties of signs, they identify a ‘static’ degree of grammaticalization. To capture the diachronic evolution of signs, the parameters are dynamicized into processes (Lehmann 2002 [1982]: 111) (see Table 2). A loss of semantic and phonological integrity is called *attrition* – other terms are bleaching and erosion. An increase in paradigmaticity, *paradigmaticization*, means that grammatical formatives are integrated into increasingly small, homogeneous paradigms (Lehmann 1985: 4).¹ The process of *obligatorification*, a loss of paradigmatic variability, is related to paradigmaticization in that it subjects the choice in the paradigm to grammatical rules and makes a choice from the paradigm increasingly obligatory, which drastically expands the distribution of the grammaticalized forms in it. The shrinkage of scope is captured as *condensation*. An increase in bondedness, *coalescence*, is primarily to be viewed as a structural phenomenon which “leads from juxtaposition via cliticization, agglutination and fusion to symbolic alternation” (Lehmann 1985: 5). This may involve a transformation of syntactic boundaries to morphological boundaries and may lead to the disappearance of these boundaries, as in OHG *dia wila* ‘in that time span’ > MHG *diweil* ‘during’ > NHG *weil* ‘during’. The initial phase of coalescence does not consist of a noticeable change in the construction, but of alternative ways of seeing it, i.e. reanalysis (Lehmann 2002: 4), e.g. *I am going to be married* as either *going/to be married* or

1. Diewald & Smirnova (2010: 156–157) specify that if forms are integrated into an existing paradigm the term “renovation” or “renewal” is used, but if a new paradigm of forms arises the process is called “innovation”.

going to/be married. Finally, a loss of syntagmatic variability or mobility is called *fixation*.

Table 2. Lehmann’s dynamicized parameters

	Paradigmatic	Syntagmatic
Weight	Attrition	Condensation
Cohesion	Paradigmaticization	Fusion
Variability	Obligatorification	Fixation

Although their wide application testifies to the merit of Lehmann’s parameters as recognition criteria for grammaticalization, several aspects of Lehmann’s analysis have given rise to critical reflections and refinements. Firstly, some of the *individual parameters* have come under discussion. Most famously, the idea of scope reduction has been challenged on the basis of a wide range of descriptive studies, including studies of modals, discourse markers, etc. Authors such as Diewald (1997: 23, 1999: 21), Nordlinger & Traugott (1997), Tabor & Traugott (1998) and Roberts & Roussou (2003), have argued that grammaticalization typically goes together with scope² expansion, as witnessed for example in the development from deontic to epistemic modals: the former have only the predicate in their scope, but the latter the whole utterance. Another parameter that has been subject to debate is obligatorification. Diewald (1997) has pointed out that there are cases where the grammaticalizing form does not become obligatory. For instance, modal verbs do not have to be expressed in every utterance, whereas mood does. Therefore, Diewald & Smirnova (2010: 99–100) make a distinction between ‘language internal obligatoriness’ and ‘communicative obligatoriness’. The first kind holds when a form is 100% obligatory and its placement is governed by grammatical rules – this is the kind captured in Lehmann’s parameter. The second kind does not mean that a form is required by the grammar, but that it is required by the speaker’s communicative intentions. If, for example, a speaker wants to put the focus on the patient or beneficiary,

2. It can be noted that this notion of scope situates itself more at the discourse level, whereas Lehmann’s pertains to constituent structure. Looking strictly at constituent structure, Fischer (2010: 24–30) has argued that the shift from deontic to epistemic modality in English did not at first involve scope expansion. Epistemic readings appeared in impersonal clauses such as *mæg gewurðan þæt* + proposition (‘it may happen that’), in which the modal’s immediate scope was over an infinitive, just as in the deontic constructions. The proposition being - indirectly - modified occurs at a lower structural level, viz. as a complement of the copular verb.

he will have to use one of two passive strategies in German, but the passive does not have to occur obligatorily in a sentence.

Lehmann's formalization of the parameters of grammaticalization can also be linked to three general areas of debate in grammaticalization research. Firstly, several linguists e.g. Sweetser (1990), Heine (1993), Heine, Claudi & Hünemeyer (1991) and most prominently Traugott (1989, 2003b, 2010), Traugott & König (1991), Hopper & Traugott (1993 [2003]), Traugott & Dasher (2002), have criticized the *minor role assigned to semantic change* in Lehmann's parameters. They argue that semantic change in grammaticalization cannot be conceived as mere loss of semantic content. Rather, loss of descriptive content is counterbalanced by a gain in pragmatic and procedural functionality that the item did not have before. Traugott & König (1991: 190–191) pointed out that it was precisely because grammaticalization was prototypically seen as a loss that it took some time for the relevance of pragmatics to be recognized, also in the motivations for the process (see below). Grammaticalization begins when the original coded meaning is enriched with pragmatic values, the stage Traugott (1989) refers to as 'pragmatic strengthening'. For instance, in specific contexts a *bit*, which literally meant 'a bite', came to be associated with the invited pragmatic inference of 'small quantity'. In a following stage, the purely scalar quantitative meaning of 'little' came to be conventionally coded by the form a *bit of*. It is with the establishment of this new form-meaning pair that we can speak of grammaticalization (Traugott 2010).³ In this model grammaticalization thus starts off with context-induced semantic change. The general applicability of this model has been questioned by other authors. Even though formal change characteristically lags behind function change, function change may also be a reaction to structural change (Newmeyer 1998: 248–251) or a result of form-based analogy (Heath 1998; Fischer 2007: 123–124).

The *mechanisms of context-induced semantic change* were further developed by, amongst others, Heine (1992, 2002) and Diewald (2002, 2006, 2008; Diewald & Ferraresi 2008). Heine (1992, 1993) proposed that change in grammaticalization proceeds along three stages in an 'overlap' model. A first stage in which the grammaticalizing item has its original meaning (A), a second stage in which it has both its original meaning (A) and a new grammaticalized meaning (B), and

3. The focus on the semantics of grammaticalization has given rise to a fruitful paradigm in grammaticalization studies focusing on more specific types of semantic change including most prominently subjectification and intersubjectification (e.g. Traugott 1989, 2003b, 2010; Stein & Wright 1995; Traugott & Dasher 2002; Athanasiadou, Costas & Cornillie 2006; Davidse, Vandelanotte & Cuyckens 2010).

finally a stage in which the grammaticalized meaning (B) is the only interpretation possible. This results in a chain-like structure: $A > A/B > B$.⁴ As set out by Heine, the stages can be used as analytic tools for the detection of (different stages) of grammaticalization in the synchronic form of the language. Later, this model was further developed by Heine (2002) and by Diewald (2002, 2006, 2008; Diewald & Ferraresi 2008) into two similar but not wholly equivalent models, in which the stages are defined as types of ‘context’, allowing the analyst to detect ongoing processes of grammaticalization and to establish the degree to which the processes have advanced at a particular time in a language. Diewald & Smirnova (this volume) argue that the stages of grammaticalization they proposed earlier have to be completed by a fourth, new, stage, viz. paradigmatic integration.

Secondly, Lehmann conceptualized grammaticalization as a process with both a synchronic and diachronic side. From a diachronic perspective, grammaticalization is a process of change turning “lexemes into grammatical formatives and mak[ing] grammatical formatives still more grammatical”, whereas on the synchronic side it is a “principle according to which subcategories of a given grammatical category may be ordered” (Lehmann 1985: 7). His parameters are devised to reflect this dual perspective: on the one hand there are parameters that serve to describe a more or less ‘stative’ synchronic distribution of forms, on the other hand these parameters are dynamicized into processes that chart the historical evolution of the forms. In this view, the synchronic and the diachronic perspectives are not mutually exclusive, but complementary. Grammaticalization can be studied both diachronically, by comparison of data from different language stages, and synchronically, by investigation of the current functional variation. Other studies, e.g. Traugott & Heine (1991), Hopper & Traugott (1993 [2003]), have emphasized the *interplay between the diachronic and synchronic sides of grammaticalization*, and have connected ongoing change with synchronic variation. The core of this idea was first formulated by Hopper (1991). Hopper argued that the parameters proposed by Lehmann (1982, 1985) could only detect grammaticalization in an advanced stage. In order to remedy this, he put forward five complementary principles indicative of early-stage grammaticalization (but not exclusive to grammaticalization): layering, divergence, specialization, persistence and decategorialization. The first two principles introduce the idea that diachronic change can lead to synchronic variation. The first principle, *layering*, invokes the notion of a synchronic domain

4. It has been clarified by Heine and many others, e.g. Hopper & Traugott (2003: 121–122) that a development does not have to proceed unto the last stage (B only), but that a language can maintain stage A/B or even lose the B meaning, de facto resulting in a stage with only A again.