
**Grammaticalization**

**CHAPTER 1 – SOME PRELIMINARIES**

Hopper & Traugott’s point of view on grammaticalization

**A definition of grammaticalization:**

Hopper & Traugott’s two-pronged definition of grammaticalization:

(i) A research framework for studying the relationships between lexical, constructional, and grammatical material in language, diachronically and synchronically, both in particular languages and cross-linguistically.

(ii) A term referring to the change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions.

**Change as an ongoing process and the “panchronic” (Svorou, 1994) view of language:**

The study of grammaticalization implies a panchronic view of language; to break the discreteness between synchrony and diachrony:

(a) earlier forms may coexist with later ones

(b) earlier meaning may constrain later meanings and/or structural characteristics

This emphasizes the fact that language is an ongoing process and that a change is only incompletely achieved at any given stage of language.

Hopper & Traugott thus ask linguistic theory the following question:

“Do we need in our analyses to “stop the film” and fix the grammar of a language as we investigate its structure, or do we need to view “grammar” as a provisional way-station in our search for the more general characteristics of language as a process for organizing cognitive and communicative content?”

**The notion of “cline”:**

“The term “cline” is a metaphor for the empirical observation that cross-linguistically forms tend to undergo the same kinds of changes or have similar sets of relationships, in similar orders”. A cline is thus both diachronic (diachrony = schema of evolution) and synchronic (co-existence of all the forms), emphasizing the fact that grammaticalization is a panchronic phenomenon.

**The unidirectionality of language change**

“The principle that has come to be known as unidirectionality is an assertion about the change “less grammatical > more grammatical” that is fundamental to grammaticalization. [...] Like the study of universals, unidirectionality is an empirical as well as a theoretical matter”. Hopper & Traugott remain cautious and underline the existence of counterexamples (unidirectionality = tendency rather than theoretical absolute). More of them are to be discovered; they remain open to the possible invalidity of the notion of unidirectional change.

**CHAPTER 2 – THE HISTORY OF GRAMMATICALIZATION**

The history of the theory of grammaticalization from Humboldt to nowadays

Cf. book.

**CHAPTER 3 – MECHANISMS: REANALYSIS AND ANALOGY**

The role of these two important mechanisms in grammaticalization;

About speaker’s perception in language change

They are the result of one basic logical principle of reasoning: abduction, which is the “predominant mode of reasoning in language learning” (by contrast with deduction and induction: cf. book).
Language learning does not mean necessarily language acquisition by children; people continue to learn and innovate throughout adulthood. Thus, language change arises as a result of language acquisition by adults as well as children.

Hopper & Traugott’s definition of reanalysis and analogy:
- “Reanalysis essentially involves linear, syntagmatic, often local, reorganization and rule change. It is not directly observable.”
- “Analogy essentially involves paradigmatic organization, change in surface collocations, and in patterns of use. Analogy makes unobservable changes of reanalysis observable.”

Both mechanisms are crucial for an understanding of grammaticalization, although neither is coextensive with it. Reanalysis is the dominant mechanism driving it.

**CHAPTER 4 – PRAGMATIC FACTORS**

About speaker’s production in language change

What enables the mechanisms outlined (reanalysis, analogy)? Search for motivations or enabling factors, rather than “causes” or “explanations.”

Hopper & Traugott explore the role of speakers and hearers negotiating meaning in communicative systems (metaphor, metonymy, pragmatic/semantic bleaching or enrichment). Grammaticalization can be thought, according to the authors, as a result of that negotiation.

Cf. book.

**CHAPTER 5 – THE HYPOTHESIS OF UNIDIRECTIONALITY**

Example of the unidirectionality of grammaticalization:
Lexical item used in specific ling. contexts → syntactically fixed (construction) → amalgamate morphologically.

“Unidirectionality is the metacondition on how particular grammatical constructions will change”. It is thus different from the term “drift” (Sapir), which is “the metacondition on the way which the grammar of a language as a whole will change” (Lakoff 1972:178), for example the syntheticity-analyticity fluctuation.

Characterizations of grammaticalization:

**Generalization**

As opposed to e.g. Givon (1973), Hopper & Traugott argue that generalization does not show semantic bleaching; it is rather a balance between older (concrete) meanings and newer (more abstract) meanings. No loss of semantic substance.

“Generalization is a process which can be characterized, in part, as an increase in the polysemies of a form, and in part as ‘an increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical or from a less grammatical to a more grammatical status’ (Kurylowicz, 1976 [1965] : 69”). The meaning do not become less distinct, it changes with a constraint of older meanings on newer ones.

The lexical items that grammaticalize are typically “basic words” (e.g. “go”, and not “crawl”); they come to be used in more and more contexts, that is, they gain wider distribution and more polysemies.

Grammaticalization shows generalization of meaning (polysemies). By contrast, lexical changes show cases of narrowing of meaning and “avoidance of homonymic clash”.

In sum, polysemy and not bleaching:
“Depending on one’s analysis, these polysemies may be regarded as quite fine-grained. It is only collectively that they may seem like weakening of meaning. The important claim [in the study of grammaticalization] should not be that bleaching follows from generalization, but rather that meaning changes leading to narrowing of meaning will typically not occur in grammaticalization”.

What is true for the generalization of meaning is true for the generalization of grammatical functions: in languages we observe that grammatical forms, in so far as they have meanings, will come to serve a larger and larger range of meaningful morphosyntactic purposes; conversely, it would be highly remarkable to find a narrowing range of grammatical functions!
Decategorization

There is a correlation between increased grammatical status and decategorization. Two factors:
- relatively prototypical members of N, V, and Adj. categories become less prototypical in their distribution, in at least one of their uses;
- the more frequently a form occurs in texts, the more grammatical it is assumed to be.

Categories are generally determined through morphological and syntactic properties, or functional properties (e.g. Chinese).
When a form undergoes grammaticalization from a lexical to a grammatical form, however, it tends to lose the morphological and syntactic properties that would identify it as a full member of a major category such as noun or verb.

We observe that there is a cline of categoriality:

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Major category  \rightarrow  (intermediate category)  \rightarrow  minor category
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Given the hypothesis of unidirectionality, it can be hypothesized that diachronically all minor categories have their origins in major categories.

H. & T. observe that major categories (at least N and V) are identifiable in almost all languages with some consistency, whereas the minor categories vary from language to language. Creissels (2004) also observed such a crosslinguistic heterogeneity of the minor categories, esp. adpositions.

There are two point of views on decategorialization: the structural one and the pragmatic one; H. & T. prefer the pragmatic one (cf. chapter 4):
The structural characterization of decategorialization presents it as a loss of properties, as a negative cline (this word cannot do that, then it cannot do that, etc.). Such a point of view contrasts with the pragmatic characterization, which focuses on the fact that the decategorialized word “gains” an ability to do new things. H. & T.: “In ascribing ‘decategorialization’ to a form, we are not tracing the decay or deterioration of that form, but its functional shift from one kind of role to another in the organization of discourse”. (NB: this statement parallels their refusal of the term “bleaching” for the generalization).

About clines in general:
- Clines are not necessarily continua, but rather metaphorical generalization about likely functional shifts
- There are times of overlap between the different stages of a cline; thus, it should not be seen as a clean sequencing, but rather as a layering (sometimes multiple origins of one grammatical form)
- A cline is not necessarily brought to its end; a form may stop at one point of the cline indefinitely
- Clines cannot be read backward (a form does not necessarily have a unique antecedent on the same cline: layering and perhaps other sources)
- Clines are not identical crosslinguistically
- Diachrony is evidence for clines; yet, a crosslinguistic synchronic study may reveal the existence and path of clines.

Multiple paths for a cline

The change is not always on a single cline. One form may develop along several clines:

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1 form  \rightarrow  several grammatical functions in different constructions
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Craig calls this phenomenon “polygrammaticalization”.

Conversely, one can observe convergence of several slightly different domains (e.g. passives, reciprocal, reflexives) on one grammatical domain (e.g. middle). Convergence is about domains crosslinguistically and not forms in a particular languages; it simply means that there are multiple paths to one point in a cline:

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Several domains  \rightarrow  1 domain
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Specialization, divergence and renewal

They are processes that contribute to generalization and decategorization.
- Specialization: process of reducing the variety of formal choices as the meanings of the different form assume greater grammatical generality (e.g. French negation “ne…pas/point/goutte” → “ne…pas”).
- Divergence (or “split”): one lexical form undergoes grammaticalization, but the original lexical form remains as an autonomous element and undergoes the same changes as any ordinary lexical item (e.g. English “one → one/a,an”).
- Renewal: several existing meanings take on new forms (which are often periphrastic, replacing morphology; e.g. English modals replaced subjunctive inflections).

A synchronic result of unidirectionality: layering

Persistence of older forms and meanings alongside newer forms and meanings → characteristic of grammaticalization (= Svorou: necessity of a panchronic view of language to see grammaticalization).
H. & T.: “Layering is the synchronic result of successive grammaticalization of forms which contribute to the same domain”.
Sometimes, clear pragmatic differences between the coexisting forms, sometimes less clear; sometimes the newer forms prevail and eventually replace the older forms.

Frequency

Statistical evidence for the frequency of forms is a valuable tool in providing empirical evidence for unidirectionality, and textual frequency is a concomitant of grammaticalization (it thus has an importance place in the empirical study of how lexical forms move into grammatical roles).

Two types of frequency:
- Type frequency: number of items available to a particular class of forms.
- Token frequency: number of times a particular form occurs in text or the changes in frequency of forms over time.

The repetition of forms “emancipates” them from earlier discourse contexts, and increases their freedom to associate with a wider variety of forms.
Also combination of forms tend to be automatized, i.e. they are stored and uttered as a block + their semantic and functional content becomes vaguer and so they can be used in a wider variety of contexts.
Also, forms frequently occurring adjacent to one another may be fused.

Frequency effects:
Bybee and Thomson (1997), about token frequency, identify two effects:
- The Reduction Effect: frequently used forms are eroded at a faster rate than less frequently used forms (e.g. going to/gonna, etc…).
- The Conservation Effect: this effect correlates frequency with the retention of irregular forms; forms that are isolated in a morphological paradigm will tend to conform to the paradigm unless they are especially frequent (e.g. good/better…).

S-curves: in diachronical changes, = gradual beginnings, rapid spread, and gradual tapering off.

Counterexamples to unidirectionality

H. & T. adopt a moderate point of view on unidirectionality: “there is nothing deterministic about grammaticalization and unidirectionality. Changes do not have to occur. They do not have to go to completion, in other words, they do not have to move all the way along a cline”.

H. & T. against the extreme “strong” point of view:
The extreme “strong” point of view about unidirectionality presupposes a predetermined outcome, even a “goal” for grammaticalization; once a change has started, its progress is inexorable. The extreme “strong” point of view presents unidirectionality as an absolute.
H. & T. say that “[…] this hypothesis is not empirically supported. What is supported is the fact that there are strong constraints on how a change may occur and on the directionality of the change, even though we do not yet fully understand all the factors that motivate this directionality → Therefore the
fact that changes do not show stages that can be plotted on a grammaticalization cline does not entail that they are necessarily counterexamples to grammaticalization”.

H. & T. recognize the existence of counterexamples: “Robust though the evidence of unidirectionality is, nevertheless it cannot be regarded as an absolute principle. Some counterexamples do exist. Their existence, and their relative infrequency, in fact help define our notion of what prototypical grammaticalization is.

Furthermore, a potential problem for strong versions of the unidirectionality hypothesis is that its logical conclusion is that grammatical morphemes cannot arise without lexical origins.”

The other extreme: denial of grammaticalization:
According to this extreme, there are so many counterexamples to unidirectionality that it cannot be considered a defining characteristic of grammaticalization. (Newmeyer, etc.).

According to H. & T., this other extreme forgets points:
“One is that grammaticalization is a functionalist theory – a theory about the interaction of language and use; the questions posed in functional and formal theories are not identical […]. Functionalist theorists seek to account for the relationship between language and use, and for local, gradient phenomena in language. On the other hand, formal theorists have sought until recently to ask about invariant properties of the mind, and about structure independent of context and use […].”

Another point is that grammaticalization is a theory with dual prongs: diachronic and synchronic; in both cases there is a variability of use. Use is usually variable, only occasionally categorical.

Alleged counterexamples: “degagrammaticalization” (see book), “lexicalization”, “exaptation or (Greenberg) re-grammaticalization” (see book):
Lexicalization: examples cited are either “conversions” (recruitment of linguistic material to enrich the lexicon of another category) or “univerbation” (="lexicalization” for Lipka (1990) : “phenomenon that a complex lexeme once coined tends to become a single complete lexical unit, a simple lexeme”) → both are irrelevant according to H. & T.: for example for univerbation (or lexicalization), a lexeme must be lexicalized (=frozen) before grammaticalization can set in (→ lexicalization intersect at a point with grammaticalization, and is not a mirror image of it).

In the final, H. & T. consider the counterexamples as sporadic and not patterning in significant ways, as opposed to unidirectionality, which is extremely robust crosslinguistically.

The use of unidirectionality in reconstruction

Counterexamples, however, must caution us against making uncritical inferences about directions of grammaticalization where historical data are not available, since anomalous development can never be excluded. Lehmann, according to H. & T., is too confident, as opposed to Bybee, who is cautious in her statements about reconstruction:
“ We would…expect grams that are older – i.e., that have undergone more development – to be closer to the stem, more fused and shorter or more reduced in segmental material than younger grams of equal relevance” (Bybee et al. 1991).

Too much confidence can also lead to mistake with respect to attested data (cf. example in book).

CONCLUSION

- Grammaticalization exists and attests unidirectionality and (unidirectional) decategorialization.
- Typologically widespread changes with systematic patterning (as opposed to the alleged counterexamples).
- Reconstruction based on assumption of unidirectional match between cline and direction of change in a specific instance should be framed as testable hypotheses.

CHAPTER 6 – CLAUSE-INTERNAL MORPHOLOGICAL CHANGES

Specific instances of regularly recurring types of unidirectionality:
focus on changes that typically occur clause-internally

Chapter topic:
- “compacting” or morphologization
- development of grammatical forms in two domains: that of the paradigm, and that of clause structure
- “end” of grammaticalization: loss

Cf. book
CHAPTER 7 – GRAMMATICALIZATION ACROSS CLAUSES

Cross-clause changes

About the devices of linking clauses together into what are called complex sentences. These may differ quite radically across and within languages and discourse. Less attention paid to the possibility of including the process of clause combining itself within grammaticalization, except in Givon (1979 : 209). According to him, there is a path of grammaticalization in clause combining:

Discourse > syntax > morphology > morphophonemics > zero

Two axes of this chapter:

- to show that synchronic clause combining may have a unidirectional cline from relatively free juxtaposition to syntactic and morphological bondedness within the frame of grammaticalization
- to show that clause combining across time (and so complex sentence structure) may be explained or enlightened by the theory of grammaticalization

Conclusion of the chapter: typically, the shift is from less to more bounded; outcome of this unification = development of simple clauses out of complex structures, with an original verbal construction coming to be downgraded into auxiliary-like status or into adverbial status.

CHAPTER 8 – GRAMMATICALIZATION IN SITUATIONS OF EXTREME LANGUAGE CONTACT

Most of the work on grammaticalization was conducted on a rather monogenetic point of view (tradition of comparative linguistics). This chapter turns to the question whether studies of contact situations raise special issues regarding grammaticalization.

About contact situations, H. & T. ignore two situations: borrowing and areal situations (language admixture across a wide area). Instead, they look at pidgins and creoles, languages that evidence extensive influence, “intertwining”.

Pidgins and creoles provide insights into how the progression of grammaticalization across languages as well as time can be conceptualized. They are particularly important to historical linguistics since, as opposed to the material studied in historical linguistics, the contemporary varieties are relatively recent in origin and exemplify rapid change in non-literate situations.

Plus, the distinction often made in historical work between “internal” and “external” factors in change, may be wrong – this is particularly clear with pidgins and creoles (no homogeneity, importance of second language acquisition…). Every factors are intertwined in language change.

A pidgin is a non-native contact language which typically develops in social situations characterized by major class distinctions and by numerical disparities between these classes. Relatively simple grammatical structure.

By contrast, a creole is typically (not necessarily) a native language, more complex, its degree of “simplicity” (in comparison with other languages) depending on its social function and longevity.

Dominant group > “superstrate” language
Subordinate group > “substrate” language

Cf books: characteristics of pidgins / characteristics of creoles.

Pidgins and creoles → two issues about language changes: the role of child versus adult language acquisitions and the role of simplification/elaboration (cf. book).

Conclusion on the implications of creole and pidgins for grammaticalization:

The study of the development of mixed languages demands more attention to multiple origins of grammatical structures. Contact has been an important factor for most languages → a strictly monogenetic view of grammaticalization is ultimately inappropriate. Also necessity of the understanding of the mechanisms and motivations for change, including grammaticalization.
CHAPTER 9 – SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

Chapter 1 and 2: Two pronged approach (study proper and field of research).

Chapter 3 and 4: Grammaticalization can be thought of as the result of the continual negotiation of meaning that speakers and hearers engage in the context of discourse production and perception. Grammaticalization is conceptualized as a type of change not limited to early child language acquisition or to perception.

Grammaticalization is a subset of possible change. It excludes semantic change, abrupt word formation, purely phonological change, also those may be precursors or by-products of grammaticalization. Excluded word-order change but interacts a lot with it. It is correlated with semantic and pragmatic changes.

It is typically unidirectional, and gradual (over time and as for frequency). The so-called “paths” of grammaticalization are schemas that can be seen from the distance of time, and synchronically they are accessible only indirectly through patterns of frequency and generational differences. Study of grammaticalization = attempt to show that language change is neither random nor unpredictable.

All change, including grammaticalization, must be thought in terms of tendencies, not absolutes.

Reconstructions based on an assumption of unidirectional match between cline and direction of change in a specific instance should be made with caution and framed as testable hypotheses.

Much still remain to be understood:
- how gradualness is to be understood
- issues in creolization
- general question: how changes in language may lead to changes in the language system

Necessity to coordinate historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and corpus studies.