

What makes grammaticalization? A look from its fringes. Bisang, Walter, Himmelmann, Nikolaus P., & Wiemer Bjorn, (eds.). 2004. (Trends in Linguistics). Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 354, vi.

In a little more than half a century the concept of grammaticalization has been established as a means of accounting for various language changes, and much has been written, supporting and refuting, this developing topic. The eleven essays that constitute this book contribute to that literature, addressing processes, as the title suggests, off the beaten path of grammaticalization theory. These discussions involve sometimes intricate treatment of historical developments; space does not permit relating specific arguments in detail (nor would such be to the purpose), but a few salient points and their implications will be highlighted, along with brief comments and the occasional critique.

In their opening chapter, “What Makes Grammaticalization? An Appraisal of its Components and Fringes” (3 – 20), the editors explain the purpose of the papers collected in this volume: to examine grammaticalization “from a broader perspective ... beyond changes along grammaticalization ‘climes’” (4). A brief survey of prominent literature is presented, beginning with Meillet’s now famous description, “le passage d’un mot au rôle d’élément grammatical” (3). A short summary of criticisms of grammaticalization as a useful means of accounting for language change is reprised (3, 4) and important issues surrounding the topic are introduced, including grammaticalization and lexification, derivation and inflection, paradigm formation and obligatoriness, and the roles of constructions, pragmatics, and phonology in grammaticalization processes.

Nikolaus P. Himmelmann, in “Lexicalization and Grammaticalization: Opposite or Orthogonal?” (21 – 42), points out that the two terms in the title have been used in “very different and often confusing ways,” and seeks to sort out whether the terms are in fact diametric

(21). To introduce the problem, H. employs the metaphor of language items filling two boxes, one containing the lexical items and one the grammatical, and points out the problematic distinctions that this metaphor “forces” (22, f). The excellent point is made that there is “nothing special” about *lexical shifts* (e.g., *up* as verb, *if* as adjective, *if*, *and*, *but* as nouns, etc.), nor does any reason exist “to treat splits involving grammatical formatives” differently from other types (30). H. also points out that the prototypical grammaticization (H’s term) “cline” presupposes a “grammaticizing element,” a view which is problematic to the degree that “it is the grammaticizing element *in its syntagmatic context*” (italics his) that is grammaticalized (31).

A significant contribution is the observation that in cases of lexicalization, one member of a set of items forms a single unanalyzable unit with another element; whereas in grammaticization, an item participates with “a *set*” (italics his) of items in its newly reanalyzed status, usually involving the expansion of the “syntagmatic context” (36). These observations point out useful distinctions between the processes of lexicalization and grammaticalization, which otherwise share much in common.

Livio Gaeta, in “Exploring Grammaticalization from Below” (45 – 75), supports the view that grammaticalization “can be at best considered an epiphenomenon of independent changes that take place for a number of different reasons and in different ways” (45) and concurs that “objections raised against grammaticalization as an autonomous kind of language change are essentially correct” (ibid.), yet he points out that “the grammaticalization perspective tell[s] us that a lot of apparently messy structures are the result of very well motivated changes,” which illuminate “the way language users perceive the world around them and ... the language they use to express it” (ibid.).

G. argues that “reanalysis is not sufficient for grammaticization of a phonological rule to take place”; also necessary is a “new semiotic motivation” (50). Examples from French, German

dialects, Italian, Breton, Tamil, and Welsh demonstrate cases of the grammaticalization of phonological rules at the word, phonological word, and phrase levels that involve “new semiotic motivation developed as a result of reanalysis” (59). One fascinating example involves the deletion rule in French for 3PS (-t) in prepausal position, following which the association with the postpositional clitic (-il), as in *part-il*, led to the appearance of non-etymological dentals (*aime-t-il*), and later to the development of a postposed interrogative morpheme (*ti*) (58 – 59). These data powerfully support an expanded view of the processes that result in forming grammatical elements.

Susanne Günther and Katrin Mutz, in “Grammaticalization vs. Pragmaticalization? The Development of Pragmatic Markers in German and Italian” (77 – 108), shed light on the process of reinterpreting subordinating conjunctions and prepositions to organize and contextualize discourse, i.e., as discourse markers. This development is attributed to “decategorialization” and an “increase in pragmatic function,” i.e., a reinterpretation (84). This process is of interest to, among others, compositionists, who see with increasing frequency the formation of so-called sentence fragments that appear through the use of such markers of oral discourse in the written work of their students.

The German examples discussed, *obwohl* and *wobei*, reflect “synchronic variation” (86) between their traditional function as subordinating conjunctions and their use as discourse markers that is shown to be pervasive in oral discourse. The case of Italian suffixes *ino*, *etto*, *uccio*, *otto*, *accio* demonstrates a shift from quantitative to qualitative meaning, but they are shown not to have reached the state of having only discourse/pragmatic functions (97). Developments in both cases involve departures from prototypical conceptions of grammaticalization.

Walter Bisang, in “Grammaticalization without Coevolution of Form and Meaning: The Case of Tense-Aspect-Modality in East and Mainland Southeast Asia” (109 – 138), is quite right in characterizing the languages concerned as having a high degree of “indeterminateness” with respect to “obligatory grammatical categories” and an absence of “obligatory arguments” (111, f), and the examples cited demonstrate these features. The role of *zài* in modern Chinese (117) shows a range of lexical and grammatical functions which is typical. Such processes are ubiquitous in Chinese, where, as Edward Sapir noted (1921. *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 67), every grammatical word is derived from a lexical word.

The discussion of Chinese verb-final *-le* and clause-final *le* is intricate. It is remarked that *-le* has expanded “towards the function of a past marker” (125). It needs to be recognized that while past is not marked as an obligatory part of a verbal paradigm in Chinese, the language does have *conventional* means by which ‘past’ is construed, including time words and verbal complements (*jīntiān kàn-jàn tā* [today see-view s/he] ‘today I saw him/her’). In that respect the analysis of example (29b) *Zhāngsān ài-shàng-le Mǎlì* (Zhangsan love-stay [it is 上 *shàng* < ‘up’] Mary) ‘Zhangsan fell in love with Mary’ disregards the role of complement *shàng*, which lexically conveys that the result of the main verb persists. It is the presence of this complement that leads the hearer to infer ‘past’ with respect to the time context of the utterance, with or without *-le*, which is optional, and the choice to use which involves, for many speakers, mood (emphasis) and duration (aspect).

This is a good place to point out that on the one hand the form *le* is a fully lexified item, used conventionally in the grammar as a polysemous aspect/modal marker, a situation which is implied by the discussion of the “functions” of the form, but on the other its selection and use is pragmatically determined and interpreted. Thus example (30b) *Tā mǎi le shū jiù huí jiā* (s/he

buy-TA book then go home) ‘S/He bought a book and went home’ may also be translated, ‘After/when s/he bought a/the book(s) she went home’ or ‘After buying a/the book(s), s/he went home’ (*jiù*, glossed ‘then’ in the text, in fact conjoins the two clauses, denoting a consequential relationship between the first and the second). The particle *le* marks the action of the verb as complete and as before the next thing that happens, i.e., that s/he went home. This grammatical meaning is conventional. That this is interpreted as ‘past’ is an instance of (pragmatic) implicature. I see nothing ‘new’ in this function whatsoever. Likewise, the sequence of clauses leads to *huí jiā* being interpreted as ‘past’, without marking (although speakers may add *le* for emphasis).

Example (28c), even though it does not demonstrate *-le*, merits comment. The following translation is given: ‘S/He lives in London since 1950’. A native Chinese speaker whose interlanguage has not reached the English tense/aspect system may produce such an utterance, but no native English speaker I know could possibly say this; I do not see how a translation which flouts semantic features and thus collocation restrictions in English helps us understand how this example relates to TAM. The Chinese example given does, however, demonstrate that the marker (*le*) is not obligatory in utterances that imply perfective aspect.

Example (36) *Wǒ zuótiān huà-le yì zhāng huà, kěshì méi huà wán* (I yesterday paint-TA one CL painting but Neg-TA paint-finish) is translated, ‘I painted a picture yesterday but I didn’t finish it’. This is used to support the contention that *-le* “does not imply completion of an action, but cessation of an action” (citing Carlota S. Smith, 1997. *The Parameter of Aspect*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press. Sybesma, Rint) (128). This supposed distinction (and the ? before the translation) results from equivocation on *complete* in the aspectual context (i.e. *action of verb complete = process/product finished*). It has been said that a painting (like an essay) is never really finished, but eventually the artist must deliver it and move on. In the example

sentence above, the activity of *painting the picture yesterday* (i.e., the VP to which the particle is appended) is complete. The complement *wán* in the second clause (a lexical item, not a grammatical marker) conveys that a course or process has (been) finished. In a language like English we may feel compelled to use *started to* in the translation to avoid the ambiguity, but in Chinese there is no ambiguity and no question mark, a fact which the translation obscures.

While the fanciful explanation for how example (43) *xuéfèi tài gāo le* (tuition too expensive RPD) ‘The tuition is too high!’ somehow “implies confrontation” (132), has a certain appeal, neglected in the discussion is the fact that this particular function of *le*, conventionally used with and without *tài*, conveys an attitude of excess, favorable or negative; thus, *tài hǎo le* (excess good *Asp*) ‘Oh, that’s great!’, *lèi sǐ wǒ le* (tired die I *Asp*) ‘[This is] really exhausting’, *Nà hǎo jí le* (That good extreme *Asp*) ‘That is/would be wonderful’, in utterances ubiquitous in this extremely productive context.

The accounting here omits a discussion of *le* in assertive utterances such as positive and negative imperatives, as in *shuìjiào le* (sleep sleep *Asp*) ‘Go to bed/sleep’, *guān diào le* (close disappear *Asp*) ‘Turn it [TV, lights, etc.] off’, *bié máng le* (NEG busy *Asp*) ‘Don’t go to any/such trouble’. These and other uses mark responses to perceived (factual or potential) changes (i.e., as motivating the command or request). Under this category come such uses as *zou le* (go *Asp*) ‘Let’s go’ or ‘I’m leaving [now]’, *máfan nǐ le* ... (trouble you *Asp*) ‘Excuse me ... [either to introduce a request or as a ‘thank you’]’, and *huí jiā le* (back home *Asp*) ‘let’s go home’.

These, like the numerous other uses (“functions” in the text) of *le* are highly conventional; it can be said *le* grammaticalizes these functions and categories. Accordingly, we need to qualify the assertion, “The function of sentence-final *le* is thus of pragmatic nature” (132) with the recognition that *le* is a highly (re)lexified form, i.e., one that has achieved conventional status in

the grammar and as such conveys a set of grammatical meanings. The relevant generality is that the intended/appropriate use of this conventional item is pragmatically (utterance context) determined.

Daniel Weiss, in “The Rise of an Indefinite Article: The Case of Macedonian *eden*” (139 – 165), examines the current use of *eden* ‘one’ in Macedonia as an indefinite article, which Macedonian, along with Bulgarian, in contrast to the central Balkan languages, did not have historically. W. refers to its status as “at least doubtful,” and suggests that it “is *in statu nascendi*” (139).

A “grammaticalization channel” is proposed (numeral > indefinite pronoun > indefinite article), along with other analytical tools, such as discourse structure and referential status (139 – 140). It is pointed out that “colloquial spontaneous speech is often described as being favorable to its [*eden* as indef. article] expansive use” (140), but the “tendency” in editing formal writing for publication is to eliminate it (Note 5). This is certainly familiar, as a route of language change. Interestingly from the standpoint of prototypical properties of grammaticalization, the involvement of language contact “should not be dismissed from the start” (139). In this regard, W. outlines the development of similar stages in Greek.

Subtopics examined include parts of speech, redundancy, specific reference, expansion of the distinctive function, and the role of the referential function. It is noted that the plural ‘one’ as heard in Spanish and Romanian, appears in Macedonian as *edni* only in such contexts as ‘one pair of scissors/trousers’ (140). Certainly the stylistic variability noted, along with native speaker rejection of utterances containing the item in several contexts (152), support the author’s vote against *eden* having achieved the status of indefinite article (141). This essay offers an intricate analysis of numerous features involved in the productivity of this item yet remains highly readable, with many useful examples.

Volkmar Lehmann, “Grammaticalization via Extending Derivation” (169 – 186), is one of four Slavists who contribute to this book. L. explicates *aspect* as a derivational category in Slavonic (169), and establishes the point that opposition among grammatical categories is borne by lexical stems and affixes (171 – 172). Thus he emphasizes “maximal distribution,” in preference to inflectional and classificatory obligatoriness, as an adequate “criterion for the qualitative determination of grammaticality” and asserts that “maximum distribution and obligatoriness are ... two sides of the same coin (172 f). (Readers are referred to C. Lehmann, 1995. *Thoughts on Grammaticalization*. (LINCOS Studies in Theoretical Linguistics 1.) Munich/Newcastle: Lincom Europa.)

L. posits two categories for derivational morphemes, those which change word class and those which do not (178); this supports the notion of “*vocabula*” [vocables] in Slavonic, a term for words and their derivatives (179). The argument holds that the affix marks opposition to the stem, which “more or less directly implicates” that the other category is indicated by the stem. Thus the distribution of grammatical markers in Slavonic constitutes cases of grammaticization (178 – 180). This involves a “broader notion” of grammaticalization, one which involves recognizing the grammaticalization of certain functions of lexical stems (180 f).

Katharina Böttger’s “Grammaticalization the Derivational way: The Russian Aspectual Prefixes *po-*, *za-*, *ot-*” (187 – 209), and Volkmar Lehmann’s essay in this volume may be seen as companion pieces from the standpoints of thematic similarity, aspect in a Slavic language, and numerous references to the latter. Böttger describes the development of aspect in Russian and points out how this development does not comport with prototypical concepts of grammaticalization, specifically, that items change from lexical to grammatical status, but without change in form (187). The corpus which serves as the source of data for this study extends, in three periods, to the thirteenth century, and the article provides a rich stock of

examples showing new/expanded functions at every step of the discussion. The developmental track cited by B. suggests the familiar process of reanalysis — probably the *sine qua non* of grammaticalization — as a trigger.

Ekkehard König and Letizia Vezzosi, in “The Role of Predicate Meaning in the Development of Reflexivity” (214 – 244), examine the role of “predicate meaning” in reflexivity. The authors draw a distinction between “other directed” and “non-other-directed” predicates (219), and this semantic property is seen to provide motivations for the development of reflexives in various forms across languages (including Turkish and Finnish) (219 f). “Verbs of grooming” are seen as prime examples of “non-other-directed” verbs that are accompanied by zero for self-directed use (219), but other verbs which “generally receive parsimonious coding” for reflexives, such as “zero in English” include *defend* and *arm* (ibid.). I must confess to being unable to find a context in which I could utter either in English with a reflexive direction without supplying a reflexive argument.

It is supposed that if a language has reflexive anaphors at all, it will have them in the third person (222); if we let modern Mandarin Chinese stand for languages with the typological feature of few anaphors, though, I am not sure how this remark applies. In most oral contexts, Chinese uses *zìjǐ* ‘[one]self’ for all persons and numbers. Perhaps further research will reveal a channel of development in other languages.

One remark could be clarified for English speaking readers: In the examples under (10), e.g., (a) ‘The Greens have to form a coalition with themselves’ and (d) ‘Peter will have to replace himself’ the comment is made, “the deletion of the intensifier [‘self’] would be accompanied by a shift of the main stress to the reflexive pronoun [previously it was observed that ‘strong stress on the reflexive pronoun is also a possible option.’] This is exactly the situation that we find in

the English translations” (221). In my English, the intensifier is obligatory in the reflexive; its omission cannot occur in these reflexive context.

Some qualification is required for example (27) *I'm gonna get me a gun* (Song by Cat Stevens), given for the remark, “simple pronouns [absent intensifier *self*] can still be locally bound in that position in informal American English.” It should be noted that simple pronouns serving this function are principally found in a few (somewhat stigmatized) varieties that preserve older language features; lyrics in songs of the city-folk genre often exploit those linguistic resources for the whimsical “country” flavor they index. I would not take such examples as indicative of American English.

An excellent explication, replete with examples, is offered of how the semantic features that form the topic of this article motivate the development and expansion of the reflexive pronoun in successive stages of English (232 f) in what appears to be an analogical process.

Björn Hansen, in “Modals and the Boundaries of Grammaticalization: The Case of Russian, Polish and Serbian-Croatian” (245 – 270) addresses the grammaticalization of modals in Slavonic languages. Cross-linguistic parallels are cited (254 f); this contributes to what is known about such processes. Hansen locates modals “on a grammaticalization chain extending from content words to fully-fledged modal auxiliaries (246), an important lexical constituent of which is “polyfunctionality”, which is “accounted for by the differentiation between the whole vocable ... and the single lexeme representing one distinct meaning” (246 f). This highly readable article makes excellent use of graphical figures which convey, without oversimplifying, the concepts illustrated.

Björn Weimer, in “The evolution of passives a grammatical constructions in Northern Slavic and Baltic languages” (271 – 331), employs the morphology of passives to trace developments in N. Slavic and Baltic, whose markers are “etymologically closely related” (271).

W. points out that since “lexical changes often precede grammatical ones,” they need to be clearly distinguished (*ibid.*). What the author calls “standard assumptions” about the processes of grammaticalization are found “not to be well-suited” to describe the development of passive constructions in the Slavic and Baltic languages discussed (272).

Among many interesting points that arise in the discussion, an interesting syntactic ambiguity is observed in forms with reflexive markers for both *passive* and *reflexive-causative* (examples 282). Noted in Lithuanian and Latvia are the survival of participles with *m-* (and *t-* in some dialects) used attributively with undergoer oriented verbs, e.g., *kulia-m-o-ji mašina* ‘threshing machine’ (292); the author points out the parallel of this situation to English *-ing*, as in “*chewing gum*” (Note 35).

W. notes that the track from resultative particle to periphrastic passive is unidirectional, accompanied by reinterpretation (294 f). This is consistent with prototypical notions of grammaticalization. Yet, he shows, these developments do not comport with Meillet’s description (above) in that they result, in Polish for example, in “increasingly complimentary distribution” of the forms involved, along with doubling certain functions “characteristic of the aspect opposition” (303 – 304). Thus, such processes rest not upon “assumptions about the ‘morphologization’ of linguistic material,” but the “expansion of syntactically relevant patterns” (296). This essay offers many examples as it treats relevant items across the languages considered, offering insights to Slavists and non-Slavists alike.

This collection makes available to English speaking readers some of the newest developments in historical linguistics and language change among well-known scholars who publish actively in Europe, a remark that can be underscored with relation to the four contributions from noted Slavists. Each of these essays develops approaches to language change which, while they generally may be subsumed under the head of “grammaticalization,” in fact

extend well beyond its basic description and assumptions, with the result that we have available new analytic tools.

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