What is grammaticalization?

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Based on work conducted in collaboration with

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Overview

1. Background
2. A functional theory of grammaticalization
3. Two types of grammaticalization
4. What qualifies a lexical expression for grammaticalization?
5. Grammaticalization features revisited
6. Clines and continued grammaticalization
7. Degrammaticalization
8. A phylogenetic hypothesis
9. Grammaticalization and constructionalization
10. Pragmaticalization and grammaticalization
11. Conclusion
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Background

Two types of definitions of grammaticalization

1. Definition of the change itself
   1.1 Ostensive definition, with reference to uncontroversial examples of grammaticalization
   1.2-3 Definition in terms of (sets of) features found with uncontroversial examples of grammaticalization

2. Definition in terms of the result of grammaticalization
   2.1 Ostensive definition, with reference to uncontroversial examples of grammatical expressions
   2.2-3 Definition in terms of (sets of) features found with uncontroversial examples of grammatical expressions
Background

Ostensive definition of the change itself

Uncontroversial examples of grammaticalization:

1. lexical > grammatical expression
   - verb > auxiliary:  
     - going to > gonna
   - demonstrative > complementizer:  
     - that > that

2. syntacticization
   - conventionalization of word order
   - development of complex constructions

Problem with ostensive definitions

What about changes that are not uncontroversially cases of grammaticalization?
Background

Definition of the change itself in terms of (sets of) features

Features typically associated with grammaticalization

- increase in boundness
- phonological reduction
- semantic reduction (bleached, generalized, or abstract meaning)
- emergence of closed class membership
- obligatorification
Background

Problems with definitions in terms of typical features:

1. Even with standard examples of grammaticalization, only some of the features are found (e.g. Campbell 2001).

Example: demonstrative > complementizer

(1) *I saw that. He went there*

   >

(2) *I saw [that he went there]*

- no phonological reduction of *that*
- no obligatorification of *that*
- no emergence of closed class membership of *that*
Background

Problems with definitions in terms of typical features:

2. All features are found also with uncontroversial examples of lexical expressions (e.g. Campbell 2001).

- increase in boundness

- phonological reduction

- semantic reduction

- Emergence of closed class membership

- obligatorification
Background

Problems with definitions in terms of typical features:

3. Only few, if any, features regularly accompany syntacticization.

Example: rise of complex clauses

(1)  I saw that. He went there
     >
(2)  I saw [that he went there]

- no phonological reduction of construction
- no obligatorification of construction
- no emergence of closed class membership of construction
Background

Definitions in terms of the result of grammaticalization
(cf. yesterday’s talk)

1. Ostensive definition
   Problem: What about expressions that are not uncontroversially
   lexical or grammatical?

1. Definition in terms of (sets of) features found with uncontroversial
   examples of grammatical expressions
   Problems: Not sufficient or necessary
   - traditional features
   - abstract or no semantic content (e.g. Trask 1993: 123)
   Unclear
   - procedural or weakly deictic meaning
     (e.g. Nicolle 1998, Diewald 2010)
Background

Challenge to grammaticalization research
There is no good definition of grammaticalization.

The distinction between grammaticalization and other types of language change remains pre-theoretical and intuition-based.

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Is there any substance to the distinction between grammaticalization and other types of language change?

Is there any such thing as grammaticalization?
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A functional theory of grammaticalization

(Boye & Harder 2012)

Central claim
There is such a thing as grammaticalization as a distinct type of linguistic change (pace Campbell 2001, and others in Language Sciences 23).

However, grammaticalization cannot be defined exclusively in terms of morphosyntactic, phonological or inherent-semantic features, like e.g. increase in boundness, phonological reduction, semantic reduction:
A functional theory of grammaticalization

Central idea

Grammatical expressions are morphemes, words and constructions that

- cannot themselves convey the main point of a linguistic message, but

- are conventionalized as serving an ancillary purpose by providing secondary information.

Grammaticalization can be defined in terms of its result: grammatical expressions
A functional theory of grammaticalization

Theoretical prerequisites

**Discourse prominence**
- In any given utterance, there will be an issue of what is the most prominent part of it.
- A **discursively primary** expression is prominent relative to all other expressions in a given utterance.
- A given expression is **discursively secondary** if another expression in the same utterance is prominent relative to it.
A functional theory of grammaticalization

Conventionalization of discourse prominence
- Discourse prominence is basically a usage phenomenon: The assignment of discourse prominence is basically intention- and situation-dependent.

(1) *Michael has always loved to swim.*

(2) *I believe [he loves her].*

(3) *That man.*

- However, discourse prominence can be conventionalized.
A functional theory of grammaticalization

Definitions

**Lexical expressions** are by convention potentially discursively primary.
- They can, but need not, convey the main point of an utterance.

**Grammatical expressions** are by convention discursively secondary.
- They cannot convey the main point of an utterance, but are secondary in relation to one or more of their syntagmatically related expressions.*

**Grammaticalization** is a diachronic change which gives rise to expressions that are by convention discursively secondary.

* Conventions may be overridden: In metalinguistic and contrastive contexts, where a grammatical expression is considered in relation to a *paradigmatically* related expression – and thus as detached from its immediate syntagmatic environment – it may be discursively primary:

(1) *I said emergED, not emergENT.*
A functional theory of grammaticalization

Implication: grammaticalization and structural change

Grammatical expressions are dependent upon other linguistic expressions with respect to which they can be discursively secondary in actual communication.

Example:
English genitive -s is structurally dependent upon a NP in relation to which it is discursively secondary.

Analogy:
Second violins are dependent on first violins.

Grammaticalization involves the creation of a new dependency relation.
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Two types of grammaticalization

The theory captures both standard and non-standard grammaticalization

1. The **standard** type: lexical > grammatical expression

   Compare the definitions of grammaticalization in:
   Meillet 1921: 131:
   - "le passage d'un mot autonome au rôle d'élément grammatical", "l'attribution du caractère grammatical à un mot jadis autonome".
   Kuryłowicz 1965: 52:
   - "consists in the increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical [...] status [...]".
   Matthews 2007:
   - "The process by which, in the history of a language, a unit with lexical meaning changes into one with grammatical meaning".

1. The **non-standard** type: syntacticization
Two types of grammaticalization

1. The **standard** type (lexical > grammatical expression) has its source in a lexical expression. Grammaticalization consists in ancillarization, a change in existing discourse prominence conventions: The potentially primary status of a lexical expression is replaced with the secondary status of a grammatical expression.

1. The **non-standard** type (syntacticization) has its source in a ‘pragmatically conveyed’ meaning with secondary status. Grammaticalization consists in a conventionalization of a discursively secondary meaning as a property of a new linguistic expression: A linguistic expression – for instance fixed word order – becomes conventionally associated with a secondary meaning which was originally part of a pragmatic total message, but not conventionally associated with any linguistic expression.
Two types of grammaticalization

The standard type: competition for discourse prominence

**LEXICAL STATE**

*going*(LEX) to *eat*

Competition for discourse prominence, and *going* wins the competition (so that *eat* is secondary)

<>  Synchronic usage alternation

*going*(LEX) to *eat*

Competition for discourse prominence, and *eat* wins the competition (so that *going* is secondary)

>  Grammaticalization: conventionalization of *going* as secondary

**GRAMMATICAL STATE**

*going* (GRAM) to *eat*

Result of grammaticalization: a grammatical descendant of lexical *going* which is by convention secondary
Two types of grammaticalization

Other examples of the standard type

(1) *that man* > *the man*

Faroese

(2) *Eg sigi tað, hann kemur.* > *eg sigi, at hann kemur.*
   I say that he comes
   'I say that: he comes'.

Afrikaans

(3) *Ek glo hy ryk is.* > *hy is glo ryk.*
   I think he rich is
   'I think that he is rich'.
   he is EVID rich.
   'He is said (supposed, believed) to be rich'.
Two types of grammaticalization

The standard type: competition for discourse prominence

<table>
<thead>
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<th>LEXICAL STATE</th>
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Two types of grammaticalization

The non-standard type: syntacticization (creation of constructions; Givón 1979)

\[ I \text{ say that.} \] \[ He \text{ is there.} \]

(mediated by)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Secondary \textit{pragmatic} meaning} \\
\text{relation between \textit{say} and \textit{he is there}} \\
\text{pronominal reference}
\end{align*}
\]

**Grammaticalization**: coding of secondary meaning relation

\[ I \text{ say \textit{that he is there}.} \]

**Result of grammaticalization**: Secondary semantic relation
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