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A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO GRAMMATICALIZATION

Abstract. The primary purpose of this paper is to introduce some definitions of grammaticalization proposed by different linguists. It is conceived of as a process and most frequently, it has been claimed to form essentially a diachronic process whereby it leads from a lexical to a grammatical unit or from a less grammatical unit to a more grammatical unit. The motivations, mechanisms as well as diagnostic traits of grammaticalization have been clarified in this paper. The grammaticalization process of Chinese aspect markers and English demonstrative pronoun THAT and English modal verb CAN is exemplified to further illustrate how pragmatic and cognitive factors motivate the language change. The present paper is supposed to help language learners have a better understanding about the meaning and function change of words.

The whole paper consists of four chapters. In the first chapter, several definitions are listed diachronically and differences between them are stated. Motivations are also mentioned to specify why grammaticalization happens. In the second chapter, both internal and external mechanisms are discussed. In the third and the fourth chapters, language change phenomena in Chinese and English are explained.

Key words: grammaticalization, definition, mechanism, pragmatic aspect, cognitive aspect.

Андатпа. Осы жұмыстың негізгі мақсаты - әртүрлі лингвистер ұсынған грамматикализацияның кейбір анықтамаларын енгізу. Ол процесс ретінде түсініледі және көбінесе, лексикадан грамматикалық бірлікке немесе грамматикалық бірліктен грамматикалық бірлікке әкелетін диахрондық процесті құрайды. Бұл жұмыста грамматикализацияның мотивациясы, тетіктері, сондай-ақ диагностикалық белгілері нақтыланды. Қытай аспектілік маркерлері мен ағылшын демонстрациялық есімдік that және ағылшын модальдық сип етістігінің грамматикалану процесі прагматикалық және когнитивті факторлар тілдің өзгеруін дәлелдейді. Бұл мақала оқушыларға сөздерді өзгертудің мәні мен функциясын жақсы түсінуге көмектеседі деп болжанады.

Бұл бап төрт бөліктен тұрады. Бірінші - грамматикализация анықтамасы ұсынылған, олар диахроникалық және олардың арасындағы айырмашылықтар сипатталған. Грамматикализация жағдайларының себептері көрсетілген. Екінші бөлімде ішкі және сыртқы механизмдер

қарастырылады. Үшінші және төртінші тарауларда Қытай және ағылшын тілдеріндегі тілдік өзгерістер құбылыстары түсіндіріледі.

Кілт сөздер: грамматикализация, анықтама, механизм, прагматикалық аспект, когнитивті аспект.

Аннотация. Основная цель настоящей работы - рассмотреть некоторые определения грамматикализации, предложенные разными лингвистами. Она понимается как процесс, и чаще всего утверждается, что образует по существу диахронный процесс, посредством которого ведет от лексической к грамматической единице или от менее грамматической к более грамматической единице. В данной работе уточнены мотивации, механизмы, а также диагностические признаки грамматикализации. Процесс грамматикализации китайских аспектных маркеров и английского демонстративного местоимения THAT и английского модального глагола CAN иллюстрируется для того, чтобы показать как прагматические и когнитивные факторы мотивируют изменение языка. Предполагается, что настоящая статья поможет учащимся лучше понять смысл и функцию изменения слов.

Данная статья состоит из четырех частей. В первой - представлены определения грамматикализации, которые перечислены диахронически и описаны различия между ними. Указаны причины случаев грамматикализации. Во второй части рассматриваются внутренние и внешние механизмы. В третьей и четвертой частях объясняются явления языковых изменений в китайском и английском языках.

Ключевые слова: грамматикализация, определение, механизм, прагматический аспект, когнитивный аспект.

Introduction

1.1 Definitions

It was Antoine Meillet who coined the term “grammaticalization” and first applied it to the concept for which it is still used today. We need to accept this as a preliminary characterization: a sign is grammaticalized to the extent that it is devoid of concrete lexical meaning and takes part in obligatory grammatical rules. According to Meillet, the grammaticalization of certain words creates new forms, introduces categories that did not use to receive linguistic expression, and transforms the overall system.

Jerzy Kurylowicz's definition is perhaps the one most commonly cited today. Grammaticalization consists in the increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical or from a less grammatical to a more grammatical status, e.g. from a derivational format to an inflectional one [1].

Christian Lehmann provided a more explicit definition. Grammaticalization is a process leading from lexemes to grammatical

formatives. A number of semantic, syntactic and phonological processes interact in the grammaticalization of morphemes and of whole constructions.

Elizabeth Closs Traugott's work on grammaticalization has also been extremely influential. Her definition is: Grammaticalization refers to the dynamic unidirectional historical process whereby lexical items in the course of time acquire a new status as grammatical, morphosyntactic forms.

William Croft elaborates as follows on earlier discussions of grammaticalization, which he sees as a process: Grammaticalization is the process by which full lexical items become grammatical morphemes. It is unidirectional and cyclic: grammatical morphemes originate from lexical items, disappear through loss, and reappear when new words become grammatical morphemes. Phonological, morphosyntactic, and functional (semantic/pragmatic) changes are correlated: if a lexical item undergoes a certain kind of morphosyntactic change, this implies corresponding functional and phonological changes. The pattern of correlated phonological, grammatical, and functional changes allows grammaticalization to be defined in a way that covers the evolution of virtually every type of grammatical morpheme, from tense inflection to case marker to complementizer [2].

In another influential book-length study, Hopper and Traugott define grammaticalization as follows: Grammaticalization is the process whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions whereby the properties that distinguish sentences from vocabulary come into being diachronically or are organized synchronically.

Meillet puts forward that grammaticalization is not only a process in which a lexical unit gains a grammatical function but also a process in which a grammatical unit assumes a more grammatical function. He puts emphasis on the diachronic perspective. While Traugott focuses on the communicative factors that motivate such changes and proposes that the motivation for grammaticalization is the speaker's subjective attitude towards communication.

Since the time of Meillet, there has been a broadening of the scope of studies related to grammaticalization. As a consequence, it is not easy to find a general definition, a common denominator, for the various contents and applications grammaticalization has today. Nevertheless, we are left with a notion of grammaticalization which minimally includes, at its core, some linguistic element > some more grammatical element.

Personally, I am in favor of Traugott's idea that the pragmatic factor plays the most important role in the grammaticalization process. For the next part I will mainly talk about the motivations from the pragmatic perspective.

1.2 Motivations

There are multiple factors in the development of language. Some major factors will be introduced here.

Peyrube states that the meanings of the lexical item subject to grammaticalization are usually quite general, for example, verbs like say, move or go, not verbs with a specific meaning like whisper. Therefore typically more basic words or words that are easily accessible tend to be grammaticalized. The reason is that language change is usually motivated by speakers' communicative needs, which are led by human cognition process, which motivates meaning and syntactic change in the most common words.

Pragmatic Factor. Hopper & Traugott believe that pragmatic inferencing is a motivation for grammaticalization. The speaker and the hearer negotiate meaning in communicative situations. The speaker's role is based on the economical principle, which means the speaker always tries to use least possible words to clearly express most possible information or to maximize the sphere of usage of one specific language form. One classic example of this is that [be going to] gains the meaning of futurity through grammaticalization.

Cognitive Factor. It is regarded as the core motivation in the meaning evolution. Metaphor and metonymy are of remarked significance in human cognition process. Metaphor means the understanding of one concept in terms of another, sometimes responsible for language change. For instance, Sally is a block of ice. There is apparently no objective, inherent similarity between Sally and ice. What brings these two concepts together is the perception, based in part on culture and in part on feelings that all human beings share, that ice is freezing cold and Sally is someone who can not make people around her warm. The abstract notion of personality is conceptualized as something concrete. Lakoff&Johnson describe metonymy in cognitive terms as a process which allows us to conceptualize one thing by means of its relation to something else, for instance, from the cradle to grave. What does this phrase imply? It means from birth to death. The reason is that new-born babies are put in cradles, and thus, over a long time, these two concepts are closely related. Finally, cradle gains the meaning of birth. During the process of metonymy, we substitute birth for cradle. Metaphor involves two completely different concepts, while metonymy involves two closely related concepts.

Intra-language Factor. Syntactic environment can influence the process of grammaticalization. A verb is usually in the central position of a sentence, to express specific movements. When a verb often acts as a secondary verb in a sentence, and its syntactic position is relatively settled, it can easily become a verb complement, and eventually a grammatical marker.

2. Mechanisms of Grammaticalization

2.1 Internal mechanisms

Analogy, by definition, is a source of language change that involves the generalization of a regularity on the basis of the inference that if elements are alike in some respects, They should be alike in others as well (bring

becoming *brung* by analogy with *ring/rung*). Analogy is the extension of syntactic rules. Compared with reanalysis, the changes to language structure are obvious in the process of analogy.

Reanalysis, by definition, is a source of language change that involves an attempt to attribute an internal structure to a word that formerly was not broken down into component morphemes. It does not instantly change the surface manifestation of a sentence, but it often leads to boundary creation, shift and loss, which can be shown as follows: (A, B)(C)→(A)(B,C)

- (1) They have tried and failed to contact her.
- (2) I will try and contact her.
- (3) I will try to contact her.

In the first sentence, the structural boundary is [tried][and][failed to contact], which are two respective movements; in the second sentence, the structural boundary is [try and][contact], which is to say that [try and] is reanalyzed into a new component and [try] and [and] are phonologically bound together. What's more, no adverbs can be inserted between these two words. Thus, compared with [try to] in the third sentence, [try and] becomes an auxiliary.

Relationships between analogy and reanalysis: analogy focuses on the surface or external structure and makes it possible for grammar rules to be applied to various language structures while reanalysis focuses on the deep or internal structure and gives rise to new language structures or grammar forms. However, both mechanisms do not work independently during the process of grammaticalization. Analogical extension is the key process to put the reanalysis down the path to grammaticalization.

Following examples are used to further illustrate these two mechanisms. The first example is about the development of future auxiliary *be going to* in English. According to dictionary, the lexical verb *go* is used to express a spatial movement away from the speaker. It is a general term superordinate to a set of hyponyms referring to *walk; meander; run; ride*. In this sentence *I am going to London*, *go* is followed by a non-finite complement and shows the direction of movement. Only when *go* appears with a locative expression, can it have the original meaning. In another sentence *I am going to marry Bill*, through reanalysis, we can either regard it as [I am going (to marry Bill)] or as [I (am going to) marry Bill]. Since non-finite complement shows a kind of purpose which has not been achieved, it can also imply a kind of futurity. The absence of locative expression in the second sentence causes the loss of original meaning of *go*. We have to understand this sentence from the perspective of futurity. Thus, *going to* is grammaticalized to a future auxiliary and goes through a phonological reduction from *going to* to *gonna*. At the same time, the original meaning of motion and direction has been gradually lost.

The second example is about the negation form in French language. Originally, the negation form is *ne*+a motion verb. Later, it is developed into

ne + a motion verb + pas, in which *pas* is a noun and used as a fake object to strengthen negation. Through reanalysis, *pas* is determined as a negative particle and loses its original meaning. Through analogy, *pas* is applied to negation form of non-movement verb. This case shows these two mechanisms work interdependently.

2.2 External Mechanisms

Unidirectionality and semantic and phonological reduction are referred to external mechanisms of grammaticalization [3].

1. Unidirectionality. The path taken by grammaticalization is always from less grammatical to more grammatical. It's irreversible.

2. Semantic reduction and phonological reduction. Semantic reduction is paralleled by phonetic reduction, thus yielding a dynamic coevolution of meaning and form.

April McMahon clarifies these traits as follows: Words from major lexical categories, such as nouns, verbs and adjectives, become members of minor, grammatical categories such as prepositions, adverbs and auxiliaries, which in turn may become affixes. Full words, with their own lexical content, thus become form words, which simply mark a particular construction; this categorial change tends to be accompanied by a reduction in phonological form and a bleaching of meaning. Thus, grammaticalization is not only a syntactic change, but a global change affecting also the morphology, phonology and semantics.

We can take following three sentences as an example to further illustrate these traits of grammaticalization.

(4) I have a book.

(5) I have to read a book.

(6) I have had a book.

Here, *have* in the first sentence is a content word; in the second sentence, it doesn't act alone and is used as an incomplete auxiliary verb; in the third sentence, it is a perfective marker and used as a complete auxiliary verb. This process: full verb > incomplete auxiliary verb > complete auxiliary verb manifests unidirectionality.

In French, *ne...pas* is now used for negation. *Pas* is originally a content word which means step. This process of grammaticalization in which *pas* turns into a word with grammatical meaning shows semantic reduction.

Auxiliary verbs such as *have* and *will* are transformed from content words and are used together with the word in front of them. Phonological reduction is caused by this process of grammaticalization. For example, *I will* > *I'll*.

English *while*, for instance, was originally a noun, as it still is in *we stayed there for a while* [4]. But nowadays, of course, it is also a temporal or adversative conjunction, and as such it has lost many of the grammatical features of nouns: it cannot take articles or quantifiers; it cannot be modified by

articles of demonstratives; it cannot serve as a subject or as any other argument of a verb; it can appear only in the initial position in its clause; it cannot be referred to by an anaphoric pronoun. Verbs may lose verb-like attributes such as the ability to show variation in tense, aspect, modality and person-number marking.

3. *Grammaticalization in Chinese*

The four aspect markers in modern Mandarin are the perfective *-le* and *-guo*, and the imperfective *-zhe* and *zai*. The perfective aspect marker *-le* presents closed, non-stative situation. So is another perfective marker *-guo*. However, in contrast with *-le*, *-guo* emphasizes a kind of discontinuity. The suffix *-guo* “signals that an event has been experienced at least once at some indefinite time. Thus it is also referred to as an experiential marker. We can see that the focus of a sentence with *-le* is that the event or a series of events occurred and consequently there is influence to the present time. The focus of a sentence with *-guo* is that the event has taken place at least once, and it is over now. Therefore *-le* hints a result of the event while *-guo* indicates the completion and discontinuity of the event. In Chinese, pre-verbal imperfective marker *zai* focuses on the continuity of an action, thus also called a progressive marker. Post-verbal imperfective marker *-zhe* focuses on the durativity of an event, thus also called a durative marker [5].

These four aspect markers were originally specific verbs. Among these four verbs, *-le* means “to finish”; *-guo* means “to across”; *-zhe* means “to attach to”; *-zai* means “to exist”.

Here, I will specify the grammaticalization of *-zhe*.

-Zhe first was a verb meaning “attach to” in the 1st century:

(7) 甘露着于树木，不着五谷。 — 《论衡·卷十七·是应篇》

“The dew attaches to the trees, not to the grains.”

During the 5th century, the verb started to change into a secondary verb that meant “exist” in existential sentences. Through pragmatic inferencing, when something is “attached to” something else it is likely to stay there, thus “exist”:

(8) 长文尚小，载着车中。 — 《世说新语》

“Changwen was still small and was put in a carriage.”

The meaning of secondary verb *zhe* extended to “reach” followed by a receiver through inferencing principle, to be able to “attach”, one must “reach”:

(9) 更接飞虫打著人 — 绝句漫兴九首三 杜甫

“Still more, (the bird) catches flying bugs and shoots at people.”

Around the 10th century, occasionally in a sentence like (10), *-zhe* indicates that the event continues. I think this change comes from the verb meaning “existing”. If something exists at one place, it is likely to continue to be there. In (11), the sentence with *-zhe* also means two actions are going on at the same time, one action exists to serve as background information.

Furthermore, this zhe acts more like a grammatical marker than a verb because it is closely attached to the main verb. These usage of zhe is very close that of it in modern Mandarin.

(10) 堆着黄金无买处 — 王建《北邙行》

“(my) gold are piling up and yet no where to buy (it).”

(11) 播着鼓，只是向前去 — 《朱子语类卷第一百二十一》

“Beating the drum, (they) are just going forward.”

In the 13th century, -zhe commonly appears in sentences like (12) as an aspect marker indicating an ongoing action:

(12) 冯妈妈她老人家，我央及她厨下使着手哩。 — 《金瓶梅》

“About old madam Feng, she is working in the kitchen under my request.”

4. Grammaticalization in English

4.1 Grammaticalization of That

The demonstrative THAT serves important pragmatic functions in communicative interaction among the speakers. It is primarily used to orient the hearer in the speech situation. Apart from that basic function, it also serves a variety of other functions. From following three sentences, we may know THAT usually refers exophorically to something within the context of situation.

(13) This one is genuine, but that one is fake.

(14) That is really wonderful scenery.

(15) Oh, I did this and that.

The demonstrative THAT is firstly used with a directing gesture to orient the hearer. To understand the second sentence, we need to be equipped with the knowledge of basic spatial-temporal parameters of the speech event and it should be noticed that the demonstrative use is not restricted to the concrete referents. For the third sentence, it requires the hearer to process the sentence and think about what the referent is.

Unlike exophoric THAT, anaphoric use serves a language-internal function. It is co-referential with a noun or noun phrase in the previous discourse and it refers to the same referent as its antecedent. For example:

(16) The government has formulated a new regulation. That new regulation applies to new buildings and alternations and extensions of existing buildings.

THAT can also be used to refer to the extended text and we refer this extended reference as the discourse deictic use. To be more specific, discourse deictic THAT draws the hearer's attention on the meaning expressed by a clause, a sentence or a paragraph. THAT can refer to either preceding discourse or following discourse. Following sentences are used to illustrate this point.

(17) They broke a Chinese vase. That was careless.

(18) No one will take it seriously. That is the frightening thing.

(19) I like that. He damages my bike and blames me for letting him use it.

(20) What do you think of that? Bob smashes my car and and then expects me to pay for the repairs.

Now, we have a basic understanding of the these pragmatic uses, and then we need to investigate the relationships among these uses from the diachronic perspective. Following sentences can make the relationship clear.

(21) Please pick that up.

(22) John bought a car last year. That car proved to be a disaster.

(23) John failed in the exam. I can not believe that.

(24) Galileo said that the earth is round.

We can use this chain to summarize these sentences up: exophoric use>anaphoric use>discourse deictic use>complementizer.

4.2 Grammaticalization of *Can*

In terms of meanings of can, it has both modal and non-modal meanings in Old English period. As a full verb, can in Old English period means “to know, have power to, and be mentally able to”. In Middle English period, can is used extensively and the meaning of ability extends from mental to general in this period. The lexical meanings of can completely disappear in Modern English period. The meaning, permission of can, appears at the same time. According to contemporary dictionaries, the sense of can in this period are ability, permission, and possibility. These meanings are respectively shown in following examples:

(25) As a result, sheep can make it through the coldest months with fewer fat reserves.

(26) In the library, you can take a book out and keep it out for a whole year unless it is recalled.

The meaning of permission refers to an agent is allowed or permitted to do something. Therefore sometimes there can be two possible interpretations in one sentence:

(27) Elephants can kill crocodiles.

This sentence can be understood either as “elephants have the ability to kill crocodiles” or as “it can happen that an elephant kills a crocodile”

Thus, the semantic evolution of modal verb can .is described as mental ability>general ability>root ability.

5. Conclusion

Grammaticalization is a complicated phenomenon and from examples listed above, we reach the conclusion that its process is closely related to human cognitive process and pragmatic use. We have known that some grammatical items derive from lexical items over time through analogy and reanalysis, thus we can better understand the meanings of grammatical items because of its remarkable relevance to the original meaning. However in this

paper, I just analyzed the grammaticalization process mainly from cognitive and pragmatic aspects and didn't exhaust all the possible reasons for these semantic and functional change.

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