



(Inter)subjectification and its limits in secondary grammaticalization



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ABSTRACT

It is widely accepted that subjectification and intersubjectification are important processes of semantic change accompanying grammaticalization. However, typical changes of subjectification concern early stages of grammaticalization, and the role of subjectification and intersubjectification in late stages of grammaticalization is not yet fully explored. In this paper, I am looking for (1) regular changes other than (inter)subjectification in secondary grammaticalizations, and (2) counter-examples to the hypothesized directionalities of change. In doing so, I mainly look at the development of core case marking, at the development of elements with textual functions, and at presumptive counter-examples from other areas of grammar that have been proposed in the literature. I conclude that (1) the evolution of textual/discourse-functions is a significant development not captured in the canonical (inter-)subjectification scenario both in terms of concept and in terms of directionality, and (2) that de-subjectification and de-intersubjectification in terms of expressive (inter)subjectivity regularly takes place at later stages of grammaticalization. However, this de-(inter)subjectification mainly accompanies the development of highly paradigmatic and abstract meanings, and concerns a loss of subjectivity in terms of expressiveness. On the other hand, since meanings are increasingly appropriated for the expression of speaker-deixis and internal reasoning, the overall directionality of change can still be understood as speaker-, hearer- and text-orientation, and it might not be appropriate to label the overall development as 'de-subjectification' or 'objectification'.

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1. Introduction

Subjectification and intersubjectification have been firmly established in the literature as semantic changes central to grammaticalization. On the other hand, their relationship to different stages of grammaticalization is not yet fully explored. It has been suggested that subjectification is widely involved in grammaticalization (Traugott, 1995; Visconti, 2013), and hypothesized that intersubjectification presupposes subjectification and follows it (Traugott, 2003), leading to an association of intersubjectification with a later stage of grammaticalization. There is a rich literature based on the observation of empirical data, which substantiates these claims, and it is only fair to assume that they have a certain validity. However, there may also be developments not conforming to this scenario. Recently, it has been suggested that a third tendency of 'textual orientation' is

Abbreviations: 3, 3rd person; ACC, accusative; EPI, epistemic modality; F, feminine; GEN, genitive; INF, infinitive; LOC, locative; M, masculine; NEG, negation; NOM, nominative; Part, participle; PERF, perfect; PFV, perfective; PRG, progressive; PP, prepositional phrase; PST, past tense; QUE, interrogative; S, singular; TAG, tag; TOP, topic.

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necessary to complement speaker-orientation (subjectification) and hearer-orientation (intersubjectification). It has been claimed that these three changes together combine for a tendency of ‘speech-act orientation’, and the order between these three changes is not settled (Narrog, 2012a,b,c). Also, it has been suggested that subjectification is more typical of primary than of secondary grammaticalization (Traugott, 2010), or even that secondary grammaticalization regularly involves de-subjectification (Kranich, 2010b). In this paper, I will mainly explore semantic changes in late stages of grammaticalization that in my view potentially deviate from the expected “subjectification > intersubjectification” or “continuous subjectification” scenario. In this context, I will also critically discuss the concept of de-subjectification in secondary grammaticalization.

2. Key concepts and hypotheses

2.1. Grammaticalization, primary and secondary

For a long time, the following quote by Kuryłowicz’s (1975(1965)) was cited as a standard definition of grammaticalization (e.g. Lehmann, 1986: 3; Heine et al., 1991: 3).

“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 derivative formant to an inflectional one.” (Kuryłowicz, 1975: 52)

The first part of “advancing from a lexical to a grammatical [status]” can be taken as a ‘primary’ form of grammaticalization, and the part of “advancing [...] from a less grammatical to a more grammatical status” as a ‘secondary’ form of grammaticalization. In citations, the phrase “e.g. from a derivative formant to an inflectional one” is sometimes omitted. This phrase reflects a traditional focus on morphology that is often not shared in modern studies. However, the basic idea has persisted. Givón (1991: 305) introduced the term ‘secondary grammaticalization’, not with a definition but by providing examples, such as past tense morphemes arising as the reanalysis of either the perfect or perfective aspects or the future arising as a reanalysis of irrealis. Furthermore, Hopper and Traugott (2003(2): 18) defined grammaticalization as a “change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions and, *once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions*”, and Heine and Narrog (2010: 401), defined it as a “development from lexical to grammatical forms, *and from grammatical to even more grammatical forms*” (highlighting by author). Nevertheless, it is fair to say that change towards “more” or “new” grammatical forms has been explored less in terms of grammaticalization than the change from the lexical to the grammatical, and the differences between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ grammaticalization are not well-known yet.

2.2. Subjectification, intersubjectification and increase in speech-act orientation

2.2.1. The concepts

The concept of subjectification has been developed and brought to the main stream of historic oriented functional linguistics chiefly by Traugott, who worked on it from the 1980s (e.g. Traugott, 1980, 1982, 1995, 2003, 2010). The major competing concept, which differs from Traugott’s both in its mainly synchronic perspective, and in its very conceptualization of ‘subjectivity’ and ‘subjectification’, has been proposed by Langacker (1990, 1998). In this paper, we are concerned with the diachronic concept and possible variations on it. The current “standard” definition of ‘subjectification’ goes back to Traugott (2003), and runs as follows:

- (1) “subjectification is the mechanism whereby meanings come over time to encode or externalize the SP/W’s perspectives and attitudes as constrained by the communicative world of the speech event, rather than so-called ‘real-world’ characteristics of the event or situation referred to.” (Traugott, 2003: 126)

This definition, and the concept behind it is the result of a number of developments in Traugott’s theory that we will come to later in this paper where they are relevant.

It was also Traugott who developed a companion concept of ‘intersubjectification’ in the early 2000s, which was defined as in (2):

- (2) “intersubjectification is the semasiological process whereby meanings come over time to encode or externalise implicatures regarding SP/W’s attention to the ‘self’ of AD/R in both an epistemic and a social sense.” (Traugott, 2003: 129–130)

The hypothesized diachronic relationship between subjectification and intersubjectification was stated clearly on several occasions:

- (3) “The hypothesis is that, for any lexeme L, intersubjectification is historically later than and arises out of subjectification” (Traugott, 2003: 130)... “There cannot be intersubjectification without some degree of subjectification” (Traugott, 2003: 134)
- (4) “In my view [...] intersubjectification [is] the mechanism by which meanings [...] once subjectified may be recruited to encode meanings centered on the addressee” (Traugott, 2010: 35)

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