



Refining secondary grammaticalization by looking at subprocesses of change



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ABSTRACT

Secondary grammaticalization is often intuitively defined as grammaticalization with an already grammatical item as input. This paper investigates the question whether secondary grammaticalization is also characterized by different subprocesses of change, with the aim of refining our understanding of the notion. Based on a survey of case studies of secondary grammaticalization from the literature, it is proposed that there are in fact two types of changes that have a grammatical input: one in which the development of a new grammatical function goes together with morphosyntactic reconfiguration, which is true secondary grammaticalization in the sense of Givón (1991), and one in which there is a semantico-functional change in which the grammatical input item sheds earlier pragmatic and subjective connotations and becomes an obligatory grammatical marker. The latter development is more appropriately analysed as an extension within the original grammaticalization process.

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1. Secondary grammaticalization: definitions and open questions

The term *secondary grammaticalization* was introduced by Givón (1991: 305) to capture the fact that many morpho-syntactic markers do not develop directly out of lexical material, but are instead reanalyses of existing morphosyntactic markers, e.g.

The rise of great many morpho-syntactic patterns can only be understood as a process of *secondary grammaticalization*. For example, *past tense* morphemes seldom arise directly, but rather as reanalysis of either *perfect* or *perfective* aspects. Similarly, *present tense* usually arises through the reanalysis of *durative*, or even the *perfect* aspect. And the *future* quite often arises as a reanalysis of *irrealis*. *Nominative* case-markers seldom arise directly, but most often as reanalysis of either the *genitive* (Kurylowicz, 1964), or the *ergative* (Givón, 1981; Saxena, 1988).

The same phenomenon of **secondary grammaticalization** is also found in the evolution of syntactic constructions. For example, the *passive* often arises as reanalysis of the *reflexive*. What is suggested in this paper is that existing, earlier-grammaticalized morpho-syntax can give rise, via secondary grammaticalization, to other morpho-syntactic patterns. (Givón, 1991: 305; emphasis T.B.)

The term was taken on by Traugott (2002), who coined its twin *primary grammaticalization*. She defines the pair in the following way: primary grammaticalization is “the development in specific morphosyntactic contexts of constructions and

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lexical categories into functional categories”; secondary grammaticalization is “the development of morphophonemic ‘texture’ associated with the categories in question” (Traugott, 2002: 27). She uses the development of English auxiliaries as an illustration: primary grammaticalization is involved in the change from lexical verbs to auxiliaries, e.g. *will* meaning ‘to want’ into *will* as future auxiliary, and secondary grammaticalization is present in the subsequent morpho-phonological reduction of the English auxiliaries *will* > ‘ll, *would* > ‘d and *have* > ‘ve. Primary and secondary grammaticalization as defined by Traugott are thus different, subsequent stages in one development. Traugott connects her definitions with one of the foundational definitions of grammaticalization, that of Kurylowicz (1965), who proposed that “[g]rammaticalization 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 [...]”. Primary grammaticalization is linked with the first part, from lexical to grammatical and secondary grammaticalization with the second, from grammatical to more grammatical. It is in this sense that secondary grammaticalization seems to have become used in grammaticalization studies in general. The underlying assumption is that primary and secondary grammaticalization crucially differ in terms of their input: lexical versus grammatical material. The aim of this paper is to contribute to the understanding of secondary grammaticalization. The central question I will address is whether it is possible to define secondary grammaticalization on another basis in addition to its grammatical input. More specifically, I aim to find out whether secondary grammaticalization involves characteristic subprocesses of change.

In order to answer this question I will compare the subprocesses involved in a range of case studies that use the label secondary grammaticalization or the description “change from grammatical to more grammatical”. The case studies include a wide range of phenomena such as the development of morphemes expressing aspect into tense morphemes (Givón, 1991), the development from pronoun into agreement marker (Hopper and Traugott, 2003: 91), the development of the definite article and that of *ne... pas* as default negation marker in French (Detges and Waltereit, 2002; Waltereit, 2011). Nevalainen (1997) used the notion for the development of specialized functions such as focusing modifier and intensifier in the adverb category. Kranich (2008, 2010a, 2010b) applied it to the gradual fixation and expansion of the English progressive as aspectual marker. In my own research into the English noun phrase, I applied the term to two different developments: that of *same* from emphazier into anaphoric marker (Breban, 2010a, 2010b), and that of *several* from individualizer to quantifier (Breban, 2008, 2010b). It is these two case studies that I will take as a starting point for my investigation in Section 2. In Section 3, I will expand the descriptive scope to include the other, earlier listed case studies and draw generalizations. It should be noted that the definition for secondary grammaticalization used here is very open, and includes widely different cases of grammaticalization. For instance, cases that have been discussed under the morphosyntactic view on grammaticalization, as illustrated in the familiar cline proposed in Givón (1979: 209):

discourse > syntax > morphology > morphophonemics > zero,

as well as those that were proposed under Hopper and Traugott (2003: xv)’s definition of grammaticalization, which takes a semantico-functional perspective: “the process whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop a new grammatical function”. The latter, semantico-functional, definition is broader than the morphosyntactic one in that it applies to items that acquire a grammatical function, without specifying requirements on the morphosyntactic changes accompanying the semantic change. By allowing for a range of definitions in the case studies included here, I want to leave open any preconceptions about subprocesses involved.

The subprocesses of change that are discussed in relation to secondary grammaticalization are varied and include processes affecting the morpho-phonological shape of the items, their distribution, as well as their semantics. The morpho-phonological changes are, for example, increased bonding and reduction (e.g. Traugott, 2002, 2010). The range of distributional changes is diverse and includes, amongst others, a restriction of syntactic contexts (e.g. Traugott, 2010), increased frequency (e.g. Kranich, 2008), as well as two processes first introduced by Lehmann (1985). These are *paradigmaticization*, i.e. grammatical formatives are integrated into increasingly small, homogeneous paradigms (Lehmann, 1985: 4) and *obligatorification*, i.e. the choice in grammatical paradigms becomes more constrained by rules and the choice from the paradigm is made increasingly obligatory (Lehmann, 1985: 4). With respect to semantic changes, considerable attention has been given to the (non-)occurrence of *subjectification*, i.e. the process whereby meanings “become increasingly based in the SP(eaker)/W(riter)’s subjective belief state or attitude toward what is being said and how it is being said” (Traugott, 2003: 125, see also Traugott and Dasher, 2002), in secondary grammaticalization. Traugott (2010: 40–41) argues that subjectification is more likely to occur in primary grammaticalization than in secondary grammaticalization. Kranich (2008, 2010a, 2010b) argues that the semantic change found in secondary grammaticalization is in fact the opposite from subjectification, namely “a process by which items/constructions become less available for the expression of the speaker’s belief state/attitude toward the proposition” (Kranich, 2008: 242), which she calls *objectification*.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate to what extent these (and other) subprocesses of changes are present across cases of secondary grammaticalization, with the goal of identifying those changes, if any, that are essential to secondary grammaticalization. This paper is complemented by Breban (forthcoming) in which I explore the concept of secondary grammaticalization from a theoretical point of view by comparing and assessing different definitions proposed and used in the literature. The findings of both papers show a great deal of overlap, but the conclusions drawn are different due to the different aims of the two papers. I will return to them in the final section (Section 4).

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