

BESPRECHUNGEN

Laurel J. Brinton & Elizabeth Closs Traugott. *Lexicalization and Language Change*. Research Surveys in Linguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005, xii + 207 pp., £ 19.99.

The new series *Research Surveys in Linguistics* sets out to publish “concise, single-authored, non-textbook reviews of rapidly evolving areas of inquiry” and aims at providing “well-indexed volumes that survey topics of significant theoretical interest on which there has been a proliferation of research in the last two decades” (blurb). No one remotely familiar with linguistic research and discussion of the last decade would deny that grammaticalization is a prototypical case of such a “rapidly evolving area of inquiry”. In the present book, the authors, both of whom are recognized authorities on grammaticalization, seek to synthesize both grammaticalization and another key concept of linguistics – lexicalization – into a unified model (presented in chapter 4). This attempt at establishing a unified approach to lexicalization and grammaticalization is a highly welcome enterprise because the terms have seen a large number of different, often conflicting definitions in the past decades and the diversity of points of view has been a matter of frustration to many linguists. All in all, the authors accomplish their goal and provide an efficient overview and a highly competent, comprehensive, up-to-date survey of studies and topics in lexicalization and grammaticalization, though primarily of work in and on English. It is thus particularly unfortunate that the title of this book does disservice to its contents and is misleading to both buyers and prospective readers in that it does not refer to ‘grammaticalization’, a concept discussed on almost every single page of this book.

In its traditional sense, ‘grammaticalization’ refers to the numerous instances of language change whereby lexical elements lose their lexical status and come to be used as function words. The term – apparently first coined by Meillet in 1912 – has enjoyed a gigantic revival since the 1990s and, unfortunately, has with its fame become increasingly fuzzy. On the surface, it shares some properties with lexicalization: both concern the adoption of new items into the inventory of languages; both are essentially unidirectional and both are typically gradual processes involving semantic demotivation (loss of compositionality) by fusion of originally free items into fixed phrases or forms. These processes commonly also entail coalescence, i. e. loss of phonological segments, in lexicalization (cf. OE *gōd-spel* > [gosp^{pl}]) as well as in grammaticalization ((*to be*) *going to* > [gʊnə]). Some confusion is also found with reference to the status of derivational affixes from independent lexemes (cf. the sta-

tus of PDE *-hood* from OE *hād* ‘rank’) or, conversely, from derivational affixes to independent lexemes (cf. PDE *ism* ‘a form of doctrine, theory’). While the authors thus highlight the structural similarities of the two processes on the surface (unidirectionality, loss of compositionality, fusion or coalescence), it has also been argued that grammaticalization and lexicalization are converses of each other and that lexicalization is, or is a part of, de-grammaticalization (a view rightly refuted by the present authors who adopt Lehmann’s convincing view that the inverse of lexicalization is not grammaticalization, but folk-etymology).¹

The book is very clearly structured in six chapters: the first three chapters review the varied and often conflicting views on grammaticalization and lexicalization. The other three chapters then suggest ways in which these views may be reconciled and present one possible unified approach to grammaticalization and lexicalization. The book ends with a set of questions for further research; they concern topics such as unidirectionality, gradience/gradualness, typological shifts, and the relevance of discourse types and language contact. These questions reflect the authors’ interests in diachronic, gradient, functional and discourse-pragmatic frameworks (not necessarily foci shared by other linguists working on grammaticalization along a more strictly morphosyntactic line).

Chapter 1 sets out the basis for the following discussion of grammaticalization and lexicalization from a historical, functional perspective and provides very brief summaries of contemporary conceptions of grammar (generativist, functionalist and cognitively-oriented approaches), the lexicon (holistic vs. componential approaches) and language change (abrupt, language internal vs. gradual, triggered by external forces). In chapters 2 and 3, the authors introduce their readers to synchronic and, in particular, diachronic perspectives on grammaticalization and lexicalization. These chapters are immensely valuable for readers who have not followed the discussion over the past years (and might therefore find it hard to understand the conflicting views on how the processes are to be conceived). Since the book offers detailed indices of names, subjects, and words, these chapters can also be used as a guide on “the state of the art” of grammaticalization and lexicalization studies. On the other hand, readers who are not familiar with the discussion might find this presentation of conflicting perspectives confusing at first glance, mainly because the authors try to describe the different approaches – even the ones which are bluntly rejected in the later parts of the book – as objectively as possible. For a first orientation on the subject, it is recommended that such readers start with chapter 4, the heart of the book. Here the authors present one possible unified, integrated approach to grammaticalization and lexicalization, which crucially rests on the notions of gradience (synchronic) and gradualness (diachronic). The authors conceive the distinction between lexical and grammatical, between open and closed classes, and between productive and unproductive as gradual and base their following analyses on main correlations of categories along the following continua (see Table 4.1, 92).

¹ Christian Lehmann, “New Reflections on Grammaticalization and Lexicalization”, *New Reflections on Grammaticalization*, ed. Ilse Wischer and Gabriele Diewald (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2002) 1–18.

Level	← Continuum →		
Lexicon	Lexical		Grammatical
Category	Open/Major		Closed/Minor
Syntax	Free		Obligatory
Semantic	Contentful		Functional
Morphology	Nonproductive	Semiproductive	Productive

Of primary importance are the synchronic clines of lexicality (L3–L1) and grammaticality (G1–G3), which have their correlates in their productivity (L3 nonproductive; L1/L2/G1/G2 semiproductive, G3 productive; cf. Table 4.3, 102). The cline of lexicality moves from partially fixed phrases such as *lose sight of*, *agree with* (L1) to complex semi-idiosyncratic forms such as *unhappy*, *desktop* (L2) to simplex and maximally unanalyzable forms such as *desk*, *over-the-hill*. The cline of grammaticality moves from periphrases such as *to be going to*, *as far as*, *in fact* in their earliest stages (G1), to semi-bound forms like function words or clitics, e. g. *must*, *of*, genitive *-s* (G2) to most inflectional morphology.

This yields the following definition for lexicalization:

the change whereby in certain linguistic contexts speakers use a syntactic construction or word formation as a new contentful form with formal and semantic properties that are not completely derivable or predictable from the constituents of the construction or the word formation pattern. Over time there may be further loss of internal constituency and the item may become more lexical. (144)

This definition is certainly not new, but may nonetheless help to settle quite obvious cases of dispute: a number of examples fail this definition, including most of the cases of conversion and clipping (because they are not complex), while the coalescence of certain phrases meets the definition.

Grammaticalization, on the other hand, is – compared to other morphosyntactically oriented definitions – rather broadly defined as

the change whereby in certain linguistic contexts speakers use parts of a construction with a grammatical function. Over time the resulting grammatical item may become more grammatical by acquiring more grammatical functions and expanding its host classes. (145)

Thus only grammaticalization, but not lexicalization, centrally involves decategorialization, increased frequency, increased type productivity and semantic bleaching.

In chapter 5, this integrated view is tested on a number of case studies from the history of English, highlighting as problematic areas semiproductive constructions which are seen to be at the border between grammaticalization and lexicalization: the first test case describes the gradience/gradualness in the development and use of present participles from present participle adjectives (e. g. *the disturbing news*) to present participle prepositions (e. g. *concerning the news*) and degree adverbs (e. g. *piping hot*). In a further test case, the developments of English phrasal (e. g. PDE *think out*) and prepositional verbs (e. g. PDE *think about*) are contrasted. Phrasal verbs are understood as grammaticalized descendants (G1) of verb + adverbial particle combinations in Old English, in which the particle now serves a grammatical function within the aspectual system of Present-Day English. Prepositional verbs, on the other hand, are viewed as descendants of prefixed verbs in Old English and exhibit a range from

less to more lexical (L1 > L3) in Present-Day English. Similarly, composite predicates are seen to fall into two types: (1) those formed with “light” verbs *have, do, make, take, give* + deverbal noun (e. g. *take a bribe*), which are productive and form an integral part of the aspectual system of Present-Day English (G1). The other type (2) is formed with a more specialized verb + deverbal noun (e. g. *raise an objection*): they are less productive, more fixed and less compositional and are thus considered to be lexicalized phrasal constructions. Another test case undertakes to determine the lexical or grammatical status of adverbial *-ly* in the history of English, a suffix which has become increasingly productive and regular over its history, i. e. has been grammaticalized (G3). Finally, discourse markers such as *I think, mind you, after all*, which exhibit partial fusion and semantic demotivation (features of both grammaticalization and lexicalization), are understood as instances of grammaticalization, because they are regarded as belonging to a functional rather than a lexical word class. This short summary of the test cases shows that the results crucially rest on the diachronic, functional and discourse-oriented approach of the authors and the above described assumption of continua from L1 > L3 and from G1 > G3, views not shared by all theorists working in the field of grammaticalization.

All in all, the book succeeds in achieving the aims of the new series *Research Surveys in Linguistics*: it is a very concise, well-indexed and highly competent review of the state of the art of grammaticalization and lexicalization studies which – in particular in chapters 5 (test cases) and 6 (questions for further research) – also opens up new perspectives and suggestions for further studies on the field.

EICHSTÄTT

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