Grammaticalization
http://www.ling.cam.ac.uk/Li7

1. Definitions and background

Grammaticalization = “the dynamic, unidirectional historical process whereby lexical items in the course of time acquire a new status as grammatical, morphosyntactic forms, and in the process come to code relations that either were not coded before or were coded differently” (Traugott & König 1991).

Examples:
OE hād ('state, quality') → PdE -hood (derivational suffix)
OE lic ('body') → PdE -ly (derivational suffix)
German Viertel ('quarter'), Drittel ('third') - contain reduced forms of noun Teil ('part')
Latin habēre → Spanish hás ('to have') → (tu comprar)-ás ('you will buy'; 'as' = inflectional suffix)

**Clines of grammaticalization**
(reduction of form accompanies generalisation of function)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEXICAL (or CONTENT) ITEM</th>
<th>GRAMMATICAL (or FUNCTION) ITEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(or LESS GRAMMATICAL ITEM)</td>
<td>MORE GRAMMATICAL ITEM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREE WORD</td>
<td>CLITIC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grammaticalization is defined above as a historical process; however, the term is also used to describe a research framework (Hopper & Traugott 2003).

2. Processes involved in grammaticalization (Campbell & Janda 2000)

2.1 Phonological reduction

Grammaticalised items are reduced phonologically; e.g. (1) let us go → let's go → les go → sgo; (2) going to → gonna

Contrast:

(1) a. Bill is going to college.
    b. *Bill's gonna college.

(2) a. Bill is going to go to college.
    b. Bill's gonna go to college.
• perhaps a response to the increase in frequency in use
• perhaps related to the loss of stress (sometimes) associated with acquiring a grammatical function in place of a lexical one.

2.2 Loss of syntactic freedom

Inherent in the emergence of affixes; e.g. Latin *humile mente* ('with a humble mind') → French *humblement* 'humbly'

See also the requirement that the grammaticalised form should modify a particular head; e.g. French *pas* ('step') → French *pas* (negative marker, which requires a verb to modify).

2.3 Pragmatic inferencing

Central claim: Pragmatic meanings may be inferred in context. For example, adjacent clauses are likely to be interpreted (interpreatively enriched) as temporally ordered.

(3) a. The road was icy. She slipped.
    b. She slipped. The road was icy.

Such meanings become predictable and conventionalised. It is therefore possible "for what starts life ... as a conversational implicature to become conventional" (Grice 1975), and thereby to grammaticalize. See also the evolution of *going to* as a marker of futurity (Hopper and Traugott 2003:3).

Tendencies (pathways of change) are also identified: The main path of development in grammaticalization is propositional → textual → expressive. That is, objective/extralinguistic meanings shift to meanings grounded in text-making (connectives, anaphoric markers) to meanings grounded in speaker attitude. These shifts are unidirectional. *(More on pathways of change in grammaticalisation in next week's lecture.)*

2.3.1 After and since (temporal sequence > inferred causation)

(Traugott & König 1991)

In Modern English some temporal complementisers (e.g. *after*) allow causal inferences (only) in context.

(4) After [= because] we heard the lecture, we felt greatly inspired.
(Note that the first clause may or may not be assigned a causal interpretation.)
In contrast, *since* allows a causal interpretation independently of the temporal one and the two interpretations are associated with different syntactic structure. The causal implication has conventionalized, with *since* undergoing grammaticalization to become a causal complementiser (as well as a temporal one).

(5) a. I have learned Japanese *since* we last met. (*temporal*)
   b. *Since* Susan left him, John has been very miserable. (*ambiguous*)
   c. *Since* you are not coming with me, I will have to go alone. (*causal*)

2.4 Semantic bleaching/Generalisation of meaning

After grammaticalization, only the 'semantic core' remains.

For example:

- German *Mann* ('man') → *man* ('one'); only the meaning component '(some) human being' survives
- When English *going to* grammaticalizes, it loses the sense of motion and direction.
- After Latin *clara mente* → French *clairement*, the subject need no longer be animate.

2.5 Reanalysis

English *since* → 'consequently'; German *infolgedessen* ('following this' → 'therefore'); French *puisque* ('after' → 'since'), Spanish *pues* (ditto). Cases of causal *since* where the temporal reading is blocked are frequent from the fifteenth century.

Many examples of grammaticalization can be formulated as reanalysis + actualisation / extension.

For example: *Let us go* > *Let's go* (adhortative construction)

- **Reanalysis** - [*CP[VP [V Let] [OBJ us]] [CP[VP go]]] → [*CP[Mood let's] [VP go]]

- **Actualisation** - Appearance of previously unattested sentence forms: (1) 'Let's give you a hand' (*i.e.* 'Let me give you a hand.'); (2) 'Let's you and him fight' (American English) (Hopper and Traugott 2003:11).

All grammaticalization involves reanalysis, whereas not all reanalysis involves grammaticalization (Campbell 2000) (but cf. Haspelmath 1999).

Possible cases of grammaticalization without reanalysis involve demonstratives becoming definite articles; e.g. Latin *ille* → French *le*.
3. Theoretical Issues

3.1 The status of grammaticalization and 'grammaticalization theory'

Two camps:

(A) ✓ grammaticalization is a unitary phenomenon
   ✓ grammaticalization is an approach to language change

Grammaticalization theorists (i.e. those in Camp A) emphasize that, in grammaticalization, a more pragmatic mode of communication gives rise to a more syntactic one. Discourse patterns are reanalysed as syntactic patterns.

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Lexical  →  Grammatical
Discourse  →  Syntax
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Essentially, language use (parole) influences language structure (langue)).

(B) ✓ grammaticalization is a constellation of other processes of change, typically reanalysis plus extension
   ✓ grammaticalization is (merely) a phenomenon to be explained

"Most agree that grammaticalization is not a mechanism of change in its own right, but relies primarily on reanalysis (and also extension)" (Campbell 2000: 141).

"In short, grammaticalization is derivative, epiphenomenal, and has no independent status of its own" (Campbell 2000: 151).

3.2 Layering and gradualness

- The old form typically survives (for a while at least) alongside the old. For example, the motion verb *going to* survives alongside the future marker *going to*.

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A  →  A/B  →  B
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- Retention of earlier meaning.

For example, English *will* ('want' → 'future') retains a willingness nuance in cases like:

(6) I'm sure he'll help you if you ask.
Note that the latter observation has often been used to justify rejection of categoriality (i.e. the idea that an item can belong to one syntactic category only).

3.3 Grammaticalization and reconstruction (Lass 2000, Comrie 1980)

Related to unidirectionality is the usefulness of grammaticalization in syntactic reconstruction:

“To date there is no evidence that grammatical items arise full-fledged, that is, can be innovated without a prior lexical history in a remote (or less remote) past” (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 128–9).

This means that elements with no known lexical origin must have once had one. But (Lass 2000):

- This implies there was once a time when all human languages were isolating (contra uniformitarianism).
- There is no evidence for a lexical origin for much grammatical material in Indo-European.

Reading Recommendations

Core reading

Hopper, P. and E. C. Traugott. 2003. Grammaticalization. 2nd edition. CUP. (Highly recommended; the first edition is also fine.)


Fischer, O., Rosenbach, A., & D. Stein (eds.) 2000. Pathways of change: Grammaticalization in English. John Benjamins. (The introduction is useful and outlines some major issues in grammaticalization.)


Heine, B., & Kuteva, T. 2002. World lexicon of grammaticalization. *CUP*. (A dictionary-style list of typical grammaticalization paths with examples from across the world’s languages. Very useful for examples.)


**Reconstruction**


For a generative treatment of grammaticalization (to be discussed in lectures 4/5)
