Grammar and Grammaticalization: the case of German

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Grammaticalization has provoked a recent movement for new descriptive insights into grammar writing. Two recent books testify to this movement, particularly for German. The first volume to be discussed here is devoted to a typical grammaticalization subject, namely prepositions. Di Meola, on the basis of wide underlying materials, has explored a number of cases that can be analyzed to a certain extent as prepositional phrases. The approach adopted by Di Meola is canonically fitted into grammaticalization theory. Therefore, after a survey of the ingredients necessary for the definition of the category preposition, the latter is looked at specifically under the perspective of grammaticalization.

In this respect, it seems more adequate to speak of prepositional phrase or locution, since from the viewpoint of grammaticalization, intended in a strong way as emergent grammar (cf. Hopper 1987), everything may potentially become a preposition: "Ich gehe davon aus, daß prinzipiell jedes Inhaltswort und jede syntaktische Struktur als Präposition reanalysiert werden kann" (p. 61). This does not amount to say that German prepositions do not form a morphologically closed class in contrast with the traditionally open verbal, nominal, adjectival, and partially adverbial classes. However, this property of forming a closed class is treated in an ambivalent way in this book: on the one hand, it is considered important in order to keep functional words (and among them prepositions) distinct from the 'major' grammatical categories (p. 34). On the other, Di Meola, as well as other authors (cf. for instance Zifonun, Hoffmann & Strecker 1997:2076), emphasizes that prepositions basically constitute an open class, diachronically fed by grammaticalization processes (p. 244). In my opinion we have to carefully distinguish between a basic-

ally diachronic perspective, like the one required by grammaticaliz-ation centered on prepositions *in statu nascendi*, from the largely synchronic perspective that considers the tendentially open 'major' grammatical categories, which are the object of word formation, as distinct from the tendentially closed grammatical categories, only marginally expansible by means of word formation (pronouns, part-icles, etc.).

What allows us to identify prepositions as a well-defined autonomous category? Apart from the well-known considerations on the categorial continuum, it is necessary to focus on a number of parameters and properties that characterize prepositions within the German language. The latter aspect is clearly decisive: only within German language may some parameters be relevant, although the pic-ture valid for German can be projected onto a cross-linguistic pattern.

The first two chapters of the volume are therefore devoted to delimit this category with respect to the others in morphological (prepositions are not inflected), syntactic (they govern a case-marked argument, they typically are in phrase-initial position, though German also displays circum- and postpositions), and semantic terms (they usually have a rather "grammatical" meaning, typically of a deictic-spatial kind, with possible extensions towards more abstracts meanings). It can be further added that "prototypical" German pre-positions usually display a reduced phonological weight, being mostly monosyllabic or being a combination of a full and of a reduced (i.e. schwa-) syllable. These properties distinguish rather neatly prepos-itions from the other grammatical categories. In particular, prepos-itions are distinguished from the other functional words on the basis of Lehmann's classic parameters of grammaticalization, namely syn-tactic scope, obligatory occurrence and "morphological-etymological" opacity (we will come back to this last point later). Accordingly, they form a continuum, in which the degree of grammaticalization increases rightwards (p. 40): modal particles < discourse particles < subjunctions < conjunctions < prepositions.

The different grammaticalization degree of functional words must be related to the incidence of the parameters mentioned above: prepositions on average present a grammaticalization degree more pronounced than the other *Funktionswörter*, the properties listed above being more pronounced (i.e., closer syntactic scope, obligatory occurrence and opacity). This is the perspective adopted in the rest of the book. Grammaticalization theory allows one to point out the dif-ferent degrees of grammatical entrenchment shown by different con-structions in synchrony: "In der vorliegenden Arbeit steht jedoch

nicht der sprachgeschichtliche Ursprung von Strukturen im Mittelpunkt ..., sondern die synchronische Koexistenz von Varianten (z.B. die unterschiedlichen Grammatikalisierungsgrade von *auf dem Grund*, *auf Grund*, *aufgrund*)" (p. 31).

In the central third chapter, the stage is set for the investigation of the grammaticalization of prepositional structures. The author suggests verifying the grammaticalization degree of different syntactic constructions on the basis of the contexts favoring their reanalysis in terms of prepositions. Necessary conditions for the process of reanalysis obviously are the adjacency to a NP and the syntactic autonomy as a constituent. Other parameters considered are classic topics of grammaticalization theory, and in particular the high frequency of employment, the scarce morphosemantic weight connected with decategorialization, the synonymy with already occurring more grammaticalized structures, as well as the syntactic coordinability with other, clearly prepositional, constructions. More specifically for German, the author considers the possibility / compulsion of being preposed to the governed nominal argument and the potential syntactic autonomy. These parameters are applied to the several grammatical classes constituting, according to the author, the source of grammaticalized prepositional forms occurring in his corpus. The latter is extremely wide, and consistently selected distinguishing different genres, including both literary and specialized texts.

Whereas some parameters highlight a clear tendency for a construction to be grammaticalized as a preposition (cf. for instance the test of coordinability: *Vor und seitilich der Holzhütte standen große Kisten*), other alledged properties seem less convincing. For example, decategorialization refers to the fact that a lexeme, in a grammaticalization process, gets rid of prototypical categorial properties. In the case of adjectives, Di Meola mentions (p. 76) the fact that adjectives are subject to grammaticalization in those contexts where they cannot be inflected, i.e. typically in the predicative function: *Sie sind ihnen gleichen*. Moreover, those adjectives are particularly exposed to grammaticalization that are non-compatible with gradation: "Wenn nun ein bestimmtes Adjektiv Steigerungsformen zuläßt, ist die Reanalyse [*scil*. as a preposition, LG] nicht so unmittelbar wie bei den Bildungen, für die eine solche Eventualität ausgeschlossen ist" (p. 76). Thus, *nahe* is less easy to be grammaticalized than *gleich*, which does not admit gradation (cf. *Er kommt ihm näher* vs. *Er kommt ihm gleicher*). Independently of the non-obviousness of this example (what is the case with colour adjectives, scarcely gradable? Should we assume that they are more exposed to grammaticaliz-

ation?), the argument is in my opinion misleading. In fact, it is clear that German, with respect to other languages such as Italian, makes use of uninflected adjectives in several contexts, and that consenquently they are expected to be easily reanalyzed as prepositions which also are uninflected. However, if we want to extract from this the implication that for this reason a number of adjectives are employed as prepositions because they do not show agreement, then we run the risk of confusing reanalysis with "syntactic" transcategorization (or conversion), which leads us to another problematic parameter employed by Di Meola, viz. the morphological-etymological opacity. The latter expresses the opacity of a lexeme that cannot be synchronically related to another one (p. 52). For instance, the preposition *auf*, with respect to *dank* in *dank seiner Arbeit*, has no relationship with other lexemes that could 'justify' its etymology. However, the concept of morphological-etymological opacity is also employed when a lexeme can be synchronically related to another lexeme by means of syntactic 'conversion'. For instance, it is well known that in German the existence of adverbs as an autonomous category may be disputed, since, except for a hard core of usually spatial-temporal adverbs (*hier*, *da*, *dort*, *morgen*, *heute*, etc.) and for a small number of adverbs morphologically connected with prepostions (*oben*, *unten*, etc.), the big amount of adjectives, that constitute the natural feed tank for adverb formation, can be straightforwardly employed as adverbial modifiers. The same holds true for participles such as *betreffend*, *entsprechend*, etc. Thus, in a sentence like *Entsprechend meinen Erwartungen hat Ulli viel getrunken*, the participle / adjective is transcategorized as adverb, preserving however its original argument structure. In such cases, the employment as adverbial modifier, even though providing a possible context for the reanalysis as preposition, cannot be treated separately from the employment as adjectival modifier in sentences like *Das meinen Erwartungen entsprechende Ergebnis ist positiv gewesen*. Thus, in order to verify the reanalyzability of adjectives / adverbs in terms of prepositions, it appears methodologically decisive to test their employability as syntactic modifiers in those contexts where the agreement marker is compulsory, namely as nominal modifiers. In this perspective, *nah* behaves very differently with respect to other deadjectival prepositions like *gemäß* and *eingedenk*, all classified by Di Meola in the same group. In fact, although they admit the employment both as preposition and as postposition, *gemäß* is fully grammaticalized, and can be employed neither in the attributive (cf. **Die mir gemäßen Maßnahmen*), nor in the predicative function (cf. **Die*

Maßnahmen sind mir gemäß). On the other hand, *eingedenk* displays a wider range of employment, since it cannot be embedded into a nominal phrase (**Der seiner Pflichten eingedenke Schiedsrichter*), but admits the predicative function (*Karl ist / bleibt einer Sache eingedenk*).

Another problematic parameter assumed by Di Meola is the one relating to the potential word autonomy of a construal. According to the author, for a reanalysis as a preposition to take place, "muß die Möglichkeit bestehen, die Bildung / Struktur als eigenständiges Wort zu interpretieren" (p. 61). Explicit reference is made here to the so-called *Verbpartikeln*: "Die Bildung / Struktur darf z.B. nicht als eindeutige Verbpartikeln fungieren" (*ibid*.). However, this parameter does not harmonize with the others from a more general point of view: in fact, it implies an increase of syntactic autonomy for the construal entering the grammaticalization channel. Thus, discussing an example like *Sie muß den Fluß entlang schleichen* (p. 63), the author observes that "*entlang* sowohl als (gebundene) Verbpartikel wie auch als (autonomes) Adverb gedeutet werden [kann]. Da die Interpretation als Verbpartikel nicht mehr zwingend erscheint, ist der Weg zur Reanalyse in präpositionalem Sinne frei." With respect to the classic approach to grammaticalization in terms of loss of (among others syntactic) autonomy of a lexeme, we observe that a *Verbpartikel* has to gain in terms of syntactic autonomy in order to be reanalyzed as a preposition. Where does this contradiction come from? Presumably, we miss here a more in-depth discussion of the relation between verb particles / prefixes and prepositions. Not only because in German, as in other languages, prefixes and prepositions are in several cases very close both phonologically and semantically, but especially because the German verb particles display a pronounced syntactic autonomy, as is shown by the so-called *trennbare Verben*. Although a preposition and a verb particle may both rely on the same (usually adverbial) original element, it is far more natural to assume two distinct grammaticalization channels, the one leading to the preverb and the other to the preposition (cf. Lehmann 1995:98, Vincent 1999). The different function fulfilled by the adverb determines the different outcome: in the one case close to the verb, in the other close to the argument / adjunct depending on the verb. From this viewpoint, the parameter of potential autonomy appears unconvincing, since the opposite might hold true, namely the complete loss of syntactic autonomy for highly grammaticalized structures such as *dank*, *kraft*, *laut*, *gemäß*, etc.

In spite of the uncertain status of this particular parameter, the evidence presented in support of the other parameters taken into

consideration is fairly convincing. Among the others, the picture concerning the tendency towards phrase-initial position of emerging adpositions is particularly well sketched. One can mention for instance (p. 90) a sentence like: *würde dies … eine Expansion entsprechend des steigenden Exportmaterials bedeuten*, where besides the phrase-initial position we also record the employment of the genitive instead of the expected dative of the governed noun (we will come back to the question of case variation in a moment). Other interesting remarks concern moreover the status of prepositional phrases containing a noun that may be dative-marked (cf. *im Falle*, *am Rande*, ecc.), where for a group of locutions the case-marked type is clearly more grammaticalized than the case-less one. In fact, the case-marked type is always accompanied in the corpus by a preposition combined with the definite article, without any intervening modifier (p. 112). Moreover, the case-marked type usually presents a more abstract meaning (e.g., *Märchen weben ihre Schleicher am Rande des Todes*) with respect to the more concrete, spatial semantics of the case-less type (e.g., *Sie schätzt einen Platz im Steingarten ... beispielsweise am Rand einer Wasserstelle*).

The question of the position of the head is connected with case variation. As mentioned above, in several cases we observe a variation in case regency, which is not semantically motivated as for instance the variation between accusative and dative for prototypical prepositions like *auf*, *in*, etc. (and this independently of the question whether we have to assume a double regency for such prepositions or not, as explicitly done by Abraham 2001). In the case of *entsprechend* mentioned above, it is remarkable that the phrase-initial position is accompanied by the shift from dative to genitive. How should this shift be interpreted in the light of grammaticalization theory? In chapter four the author introduces two separate principles: the principle of prototypization and that of maximal differentiation. The former is not immediately connected with grammaticalization, whereas the latter should represent a positive extension of it. The principle of prototypization is the well-known functional principle of "rich-get-richer" and refers to the notion of prototype: it implies that if a certain construal turns out to be attracted by a certain prototype, it will increase the number of core prototype properties. This explains the tendency towards head-initial position for more grammaticalized structures. Less convincing is the dialectically opposed principle of maximal differentiation. This should represent the converse of the former. In other words, a structure that is modifying its categorial status is tendentially subject to a number of changes aiming at

increasing the distance from the source category. This should explain why *entsprechend* displays genitive regency with respect to the dative of the source verb. However, a certain circularity can be objected against this explanation. In fact, the differentiation with respect to the source form, which is a clear-cut index of grammaticalization, is the signal of an occurred categorial change. Therefore, it is not logically consistent to assume an independent principle explaining this differentiation on the basis of a supposed tendency towards differentiation from the source form. This move would turn the *post hoc* observation of the phenomenon into a dangerous *propter hoc*. Instead, two hypotheses come to mind. The genitive extension can be seen as an adaptation to the model of the denominal prepositions that usually govern a genitive-marked argument (cf. *anhand*, *anstelle*, *aufgrund*, *infolge*, etc.). This explanation is for instance preferred by Zifonun, Hoffmann & Strecker (1997:2075). Another possible hypothesis, which is not in contradiction with the former, is of a morphological nature. In this view, the high degree of genitive / dative syncretism within German nominal inflection might have given rise to case variation. In fact, it is well known that genitive- or dative-marking is strongly reduced in German, being usually realized either by means of the article (as in the feminine, but only in the plural: *der Frau* vs. *der ~ den Frauen*) or by means of case-marking on the noun in the genitive singular and in the dative plural for masculine and neuter nouns (*des Wolfs ~ dem Wolf / der Wölfe ~ den Wölfen*). In the absence of the article, the genitive / dative opposition is completely neutralized for feminine nouns, that are fairly numerous and include the big bulk of deadjectival and denominal abstract nouns (formed with the suffixes *-heit*, *-schaft*, *-ung*, etc.). In this respect, it would be interesting to verify the frequency of feminine (in particular abstract) nouns with such emerging prepositions in order to a have a precise idea of such influence on case variation. The author deals with this question only orthogonally in chapter seven, without providing more evidence that could have allowed sound conclusions on the question. In this chapter, the author discards this hypothesis since it does not explain why the prototypical prepositions are not concerned by such case variation. Instead, his principle of maximal differentiation explains why "gerade die auf dem Wege der Grammatikalisierung begriffenen Präpositionen vom Kasuswechsel betroffen sind" (p. 222). However, as observed above, doubts can be cast on the explanatory power of this principle. In fact, it only notes that for less conventionalized structures such as the ones discussed so far possible misinterpretations are more probable than for more

grammaticalized (and routinized) constructions. A final remark: the only reason why this case variation is widely dealt with by the author seems to be that it supports the existence of the purported principle of maximal differentiation. However, under different hypotheses, that must be carefully verified, the connection between grammaticalization theory and this case variation disappears.

These criticisms do not detract from the merit of Di Meola's enterprise, who has investigated a wide corpus collecting extremely rich and interesting data, resulting in a kind of laboratory, where prepositional constructions are observed *in vitro* as they get grammaticalized. Finally, we are left with a corpus of more than 200 potential prepositions enriching the picture of what is traditionally collected under this label.

A similar richness of empirical materials is also peculiar to the second work to be discussed here, Heiko Girnth's volume entitled *Untersuchungen zur Theorie der Grammatikalisierung am Beispiel des Westmitteldeutschen*.

In the first part of the volume, the author outlines in a systematic way the theory of grammaticalization with the attempt of incorporating it into a full theory of language change. In spite of the sometimes excessively scrupolous argumentation, typical of a German *Habilitationsschrift*, this attempt must be appreciated, especially because of the actual state of the art of grammaticalization studies (s. for example the critical remarks expressed in Campbell & Janda 2001).

To begin with, the author correctly distinguishes the two values of the term grammaticalization, namely grammaticalization intended as a process and as a result of the process, the latter denoting roughly a more "grammatical" form. This move covers him against the possible confusion of synchrony and diachrony. Girnth finds the clue of grammaticalization within the speech act in the relation between the so-called *Semeiontisierung*, i.e. the linguistic codification of the mental representation operated by the speaker, and the *Semantisierung*, the activity of the listener, who ascribes a certain linguistic realization to a certain meaning (p. 38). Grammaticalization is the complementary result of the former (the onomasiological perspective) and the latter (the semasiological one), as already observed by Gabelentz ([1901] 1969:85) with respect to the dichotomy between synthesis and analysis. Neither the speaker nor the listener makes use of the linguistic system in a completely unconscious way. Therefore, one can distinguish between a conventional and an innovating *Semeiontisierung*. The latter is "ein kreativer Akt, bei dem erstmalig

von der Sprachkonvention abweichende sprachliche Mittel zur Realisierung eines bestimmten Konzeptes verwendet werden" (p. 40). These 'deviating linguistic means' are the starting point of a grammaticalization process. Similarly, one can distinguish between a conventional and an innovating *Semantisierung*, which is "das Ergebnis von Reanalyseprozesses und konversationellen Implikaturen, die eine von der Sprachkonvention abweichende Äußerung mit Sinn erfüllen" (ibid.). Incorporated into this double perspective, grammaticalization theory is able to make the strictly individual nature of language change explicit. The latter is a direct result of language usage, as already observed by H. Paul in his *Prinzipien*: "Die Sprachkonvention einer historischen Einzelsprache realisiert sich in der Sprachverwendung, die gleichzeitig immer auch schon Sprachveränderung impliziert" (p. 45). For this reason, the distinction between synchrony and diachrony, which is otherwise relevant from an empirical viewpoint, loses its significance from a theoretical point of view, because the synchronic working and the diachronic change of a system coincide in usage. To define this perspective the author proposes the Saussurian term panchrony, intended as the set of linguistic laws valid in every age. Grammaticalization, as a theory that aims at integrating synchronic and diachronic aspects, adopts a metachronic (to use a term of Hjelmslev's) approach, which gets over the dichotomy between synchrony and diachrony, and denotes "ein methodisches Verfahren, mit dessen Hilfe zeitlich aufeinanderfolgende sprachliche Systeme untersucht werden" (p. 47).

The explanatory model of grammaticalization, which is anchored to the interaction between speaker and listener, is well-cut for phenomena of the third kind guided by the invisible hand of Keller (1990). In fact, a completed grammaticalization process represents "die kausale Konsequenz intentionaler Handlungen einzelner Individuen, die unter dem Einfluß spezifischer ökologischer Bedingungen stehen" (p. 50). These 'ecological conditions' drive the speaker's choice of a certain grammatical expression, which must be successively interpreted by the speaker in a concrete communicative situation. The interpretative process constitutes the pragmatic aspect of grammaticalization theory and comes under what has been investigated by Keller's model that explains language change on the basis of Grice's conversational maxims (cf. also Haspelmath 1999 and Wurzel 1997 for critical remarks). Girnth attributes, correctly in my view, this aspect of grammaticalization theory to the role played by the listener, who contributes to the diffusion and to the conventionalization of an innovation in the context of a *Progressionstheorie* of lan-

guage change. The latter must be sharply distinguished from the *Innovationstheorie*, that investigates the 'ecological conditions' driving the speaker during the *Semeiontisierung*.

Among the 'ecological conditions' we find classic subjects of grammaticalization studies, such as the role of metaphor and of metaphoric chains in the extension of knowledge, subjectification, the strain towards more expressivity as dialectically opposed to the strain towards more system economy, etc. It is this speaker-oriented *Innovationstheorie* that operates on a macrostructural level in opposition to the listener-oriented *Progressionstheorie* rather concerning the microstructural level, since it deals with the conventionalization of conversational implicatures that become part of meaning in a linguistic expression. In particular, one can distinguish between stabilizing and dynamizing maxims. The first type (e.g., "Talk as the others in your neighborhood") will determine a continuous progression of a certain change, whereas the second one (e.g., "Talk so as to be distinguished from the group"), will determine the punctual diffusion of a change, typical of innovations that usually have a polygenetic origin.

Without further going into the details of Girnth's nomenclature that aims at capturing all grammaticalization processes usually discussed in literature, let us review closely the auxiliarization of *haben* and the grammaticalization of the prefix *ge-* in the German perfect (p. 103). In fact, between the first attestation of the phenomenon around the ninth century and the current situation we find a number of changes that can be summarized as the *Semeiontisierung* of the grammatical categories: Aspect > Resultative > Tense. The prefix *ge-* originally had a collective value, although in Gothic it already displayed a perfective meaning, which has presumably developed from those cases where it occurred in combination with a predicate denoting a movement having as a result the blending of originally distinct quantities, as in Goth. *garinnan* 'run, flow, elapse'. The perfective meaning became more and more dominant, also extending to predicates not denoting blending movements, so as to get rid of the concrete spatial semantics. This extension has a metaphoric character, since it represents the development from a concrete (spatial) to an abstract (temporal) meaning. However, in Old High German the prefix *gi-* was not yet an obligatory marker of the perfect. In fact, it did not occur with predicates like *findan* 'find' or *werdan* 'become', that already had in their semantic representation the feature [+ telic], to use a more suitable term than 'perfective' typical of German linguistics, that often does not carefully distinguish between aspect and

actionality (cf. on the subject Bertinetto 2001). This limitation against the innovation progression must be interpreted with the help of the conversational maxim of the quantity ("Talk so as to provide no superfluous information"), since with these predicates the subject would be space-located by means of an excessive amount of information. Subsequently, the prefix has become obligatory in the perfect participle (except for cases like *telefoniert*, etc. where it is absent for morphoprosodic reasons, cf. Eisenberg 1998:194), giving rise to an effect of layering (in Girnth's term: *Heterogrammie*) with respect to the collective derivational prefix *ge-* occurring (with a certain productivity) in nouns such as *Gewässer, Gebirge, Gerenne, Gehüpfe*, etc.

The combination of the perfect participle and the verb *haben* formed in Old High German the active resultative construction that opposed to the passive one containing the auxiliary *sein*. In the resultative construction the perfect participle had been already reanalyzed with respect to the original stage in which it referred with a passive meaning to the object of *haben*. Notice that in Old (and Middle) High German this construction did not display any perfect value. It rather expressed a state of affairs general or valid at the utterance moment. Moreover, it is interesting to note that still in Middle High German the construction had a futural meaning when occurring with telic verbs (in which, as mentioned, the prefix *gi-* did not show up) as in the following example from the *Rolandslied* (cf. Paul/Wiehl/Grosse 1989:295): *is rother dar under, den have wir schire wnden* 'wenn R. darunter ist, den werden wir bald gefunden haben'. Around the fourteenth / fifteenth centuries, the construction was however reanalyzed in strictly temporal terms when it contained non-telic verbs lacking a resulting state. This process also contains a metaphoric extension from a spatial to a temporal meaning: "Das ursprünglich räumliche Konzept der Abgeschlossenheit wird als temporale Abgeschlossenheit umgedeutet" (p. 106). A conversational implicature lies behind the reanalysis of *haben* as an auxiliary, since a verb of possess presupposes the reference to an anterioriry that ingenerated the resulting state.

After this wide introductory part, the author devotes his attention to a number of phenomena, systematically covering the continuum lexicon - morphology, that can all be reported to the common denominator of grammaticalization. They are all extracted from the *Mittelrheinischer Sprachatlas* (MRhSA), that covers the area of Mosel- and Rhine-Franconian running east of the Rhine along the border with France, Luxembourg and Belgium. Moreover, the MRhSA presents data on speakers of different age, so as to invest-

igate the progression of the reviewed phenomena. For instance, in the case of *brauchen*, that is grammaticalized as a modal verb in this as well as in other varieties of German, we observe that the change firstly involved a morphological reparadigmatization, i.e., the loss of the inflectional marker *-t* in the 3rd pers.sing. of the pres.ind. (as in the other modals) starting from the north-western part of the area and spreading for the younger generation southwards (p. 125). Only subsequently (and for a more restricted area) *brauchen* acquires the syntactic property of governing a bare infinitive (cf. *Er brauch uns nicht fragen*). Notice however that the morphological change is not always implied by the syntactic one. In some cases, recorded south of the area, we observe the occurrence of a bare infinitive in the absence of morphological reparadigmatization (p. 133: *Er braucht uns nicht fragen*).

Probably the most interesting change described in the book is constituted by the grammaticalization of *geben* as a passive auxiliary occurring in the western part of this area and rather stable between the generations (p. 137). Although this phenomenon has recently received attention (cf. Bellmann 1998, Nübling 1999:71), it is rather to complain that it is usually not mentioned outside the German-speaking community (cf. for instance Newman's recent survey on the linguistics of giving, where the development as a passive auxiliary is not reported for any language family investigated). The explanation provided by Girnth for this unusual grammaticalization process refers to Bellmann's (1998) approach, in which the parallel evolution is observed for other deictic verbs grammaticalized as passive auxiliaries in other dialectal areas of German, namely *werden* and *kommen*, the latter occurring in Bavarian: "Die den Richtungsverben *werden*, *kommen* und *geben* gemeinsame Origo-Bezogenheit erklärt nun genau ihre Verwendung als passivbildende Auxiliare. Aufgrund ihres deiktischen Potentials stützen sie semantisch die Umkehrung der natürlichen Verweisrichtung, die für die Passivkonstruktionen charakteristisch ist" (p. 144). The basically deictic semantics makes these three predicates available for being employed in the passive, which consists in the reversal of the 'natural' directionality of the predicate. Another basic semantic feature of *geben* that opens the way for the process of grammaticalization is given by the change of possess, which can be conceived as a specific form of change of state conceptualized as movement in space. In particular, *geben* describes the change of state from the viewpoint of the old possessor, the Origo, the agent being demoted in the passive sentence on the basis of a process of intransivization. In this way, *geben* fulfills a double function:

"Es verweist qua seiner Origo-Bezogenheit anaphorisch auf das Patienssubjekt und qua seiner spezifischen Besitzwechsel-perspecktive, die auf den alten Besitzer (= Agens) gerichtet ist, kataphorisch auf das im Passivsatz zumeist nicht ausgedrückte Agens" (p. 145). Notice that this explanation assumes that the basic semantics of *geben* is also preserved in the passive usage, in line with the principle of semantic constance, that reformulates Hopper's (1991) principle of persistence. This explanation appears however somehow incomplete. In fact, because of the peculiar status of this change, one would have wished to have more details. For instance, it is not clear what the intransivization process should mean. Moreover, the possible relation with the development of the presentative construction *es gibt* is not mentioned. As shown by Newman (1998), the origin of this construction must be sought in the original causative meaning of *geben* when used with two arguments. The latter semantic development "is widely attested in languages (it is extensive, for example, in the Romance languages), and motivations for this semantic shift can be found in the conceptual similarities between 'give' and 'produce, yield'. Thus, just as 'give' involves the movement of a thing from out of the sphere of control or possession of the giver, so 'produce, yield' involves a kind of movement of a new entity out of a physical region associated with the producing entity" (Newman 1998:317). This shift is well documented for earlier periods of German, as can be gathered from the DWB, *s.v.* From this meaning, the verb *geben* further developed the sense of 'become', especially when animate subjects (that presumably are the starting point for the grammaticalization of the passive periphrasis, cf. Bellmann 1998) occurred. This further shift can be explained by means of a conversational implicature such as the one seen above for *haben*: "If X gives rise to Y (i.e., causes properties of Y to be developed), then it becomes Y". This implicature lies behind sentences like *gebst ein guten Goldschmied* 'you will become a good goldsmith', taken from H. Fischart's *Geschichtklitterung* (cf. Newman 1998:316), or *ihr wollet zusammen baden? sol es so gelten, so wil ich den dritten man mitgeben* 'do you want to bath together? thus I will play the third man' (DWB:1702), and further with inanimate subjects: *spannen sie tücher oben in auf die dächer, dasz sie in der mitte herab hangen und einen sack geben* 'hang out the towels on the top of the roof, so that they hang in the middle and form a sack' (DWB:1702, all these examples come from texts of the sixteenth century). Once *geben* took on the value of 'become' by such a conversational implicature, it came close to *werden*, sharing the same development as an auxiliary. The process was surely favored by the missing

case-marking (cf. Fischart's example above) typical for older periods of German and especially for this dialectal area (cf. Bellmann 1998:262). Morever, the reference to the third verbal argument made by Girnth is completely useless. On the contrary, it is exactly in those cases in which the (preferably animate) agent was able to ingenerate a state of affairs, and the benefactive backgrounded or absent, that the stage is set for *geben* to come close to *werden*, and to subsequently share the same destiny as an auxiliary.

A clear-cut case of subjectification in the sense of Langacker's (1990) is represented by the pre-verbs *hinein/herein*. The latter developed from adverbs following the double grammaticalization channel already discussed and illustrated by Girnth (p. 146) with the help of *an*, that shows up in the reduced form (with *n*-deletion) as a pre-verb in a sentence like *Es fängt gleich an zu schneien*, while it occurs in the full form when employed as preposition in *Die Kuh wird sich an die Kette gewöhnen*. The main difference between *hinein* and *herein* is directionality: *hinein* is speaker-oriented, while *herein* is centrifugal. As shown by the tables comparing data extracted from the two investigated generations of speakers, we observe an expansion of *herein* to the detriment of *hinein*. This expansion is interpreted as a subjectification, since the speaker integrates the "Standpunkt des Angesprochenen oder des Zielortes" (p. 154). Therefore, the speaker's perspective is no longer expressly coded: it is thoroughly incorporated into and filtered from the viewpoint of the speaker. Similarly, a subjectification is also given by the replacement of *hier* by means of *dort / da*, common for these dialectal varieties as well as for other languages of the world.

Other interesting cases of grammaticalization are discussed under the chapter dealing with changes from syntax to morphology. In this regard, Girnth mentions the extension of the 2nd pers.sing. verbal suffx *-st* to conjunctions such as *wenn*: *wennst du kommst*. The origin of the suffix *-st*, that was *-s* in Old High German times, is traced back to the false segmentation of the postposed clitic pronoun *du*. The grammaticalization of the pronoun as an inflectional suffix is accompanied by the extension of the marker to other grammatical categories such as the conjunctions. Notice that in this area the suffix on the conjunction is always followed by the pronoun *du* in contrast for instance with Bavarian, where the pronoun can be omitted. This case represents a partial grammaticalization, since "[d]ie Flexionsgrammmeme ... sich aus einem alten Flexionsgrammmem und einem Rudiment des Personalpronomens zusammen[setzen]" (p. 176).

The opposite case, i.e. the formation of a pronoun out of an affix,

represents an instance of degrammaticalization. In this respect, we find in this area at least two clear examples of this phenomenon: besides the widespread 1st pers.pl. pronoun *mir*, that originates from a cliticization followed by false resegmentation like *singen wir > si˜ @m@ r > sing@ (n) mir*, particularly interesting is the 2nd pers.pl. pronoun *dir*, that is explained in a similar way: *gꬸt ihr > gꬸdr > gꬸɖ dir*. According to the author, the motivation for such false resegmentations must be sought in a listener-oriented *Innovationstheorie*, that is unfortunately not further discussed in the book. In the light of the recent criticism raised against the unidirectionality hypothesis (cf. especially Janda 2001), a thorough listener-oriented *Innovations-theorie* able to explain such diverging changes would have been surely welcome.

Finally, the last case I would like to discuss concerns the extreme point on the grammaticalization scale, namely the noun plural markers. They are inserted into the most advanced stages of Lehmann's (1995:13) grammaticalization scale, because in the exemplary cases of umlaut or of subtractive plural (cf. respectively *ɖa:x/ɖe:ç* and *ɖa:x/ɖa:* 'day/-s') they present a high degree of fusion, i.e. coalescence. Following this logic, the type without any plural marker represents the last stage of the scale, "da hier ein Null-Allomorph die grammatische Kategorie repräsentiert" (p. 181), and the plural is analytically expressed by means of the article. Thus, the plural types are lined up in a scale, where the type on the right is the most grammaticalized: additive > subtractive > modificatory > zero.

However, this scale is less clear than it might appear at first sight. In what sense, for instance, should the modificatory type be interpreted as less grammaticalized than the subtractive type? In fact, the latter diachronically arises out of the former (cf. on p. 189 the subtractive-modificatory type *da:x/de·*). Moreover, we observe a tendency towards replacing the subtractive type with the modificatory one or with zero. For these changes are we enabled to speak of further grammaticalization? In fact, it is not evident in what sense we have an increase in term of grammaticalization: both a modificatory and subtractive plural are definitely 'grammatical'! I would rather dismiss the grammaticalization perspective, and let morphology speak. We have here the replacement of a less iconic morphological technique, straightforwardly motivated by the principle of naturalness: the more iconic a morphological technique is, the more preferred it will be (cf. Wurzel 1984:20ff.). The subtractive type is clearly less iconic than the modificatory type or than zero. Thus, language change will aim at eliminating it from the grammar.

However, it must be added that the replacement of the additive type by means of zero or of the (additive-)modificatory type (e.g., *vɔːn* 'Wagen' / *vɔːn@* > *vɔːn* / *vɔːn* or *veːn(@)*, p. 201) potentially raises p r o - blems for an explanation in terms of naturalness. Although the conditions for such replacements must be carefully investigated, a hypothesis that comes to mind is that the morphological change is here phonologically conditioned by a rule of final -@ deletion, that renders the resulting non-additive zero type less natural. Therefore, the latter is replaced by the modificatory type, following the naturalness hierarchy widely shared within natural morphology (cf. for instance Wurzel 1984:59): additive > modificatory > non-additive > subtractive. The latter hierarchy seems more suitable for dealing with such changes than the one advanced by Girnth. In my opinion, these morphology-internal developments should be left to a system-oriented approach like natural morphology rather than to grammaticalization theory, which is more concerned with another kind of phenomena related, as clearly stated by the author, to the dialectic between *Semeiontisierung* and *Semantisierung*. Grammaticalization need not cover everything in language change.

To conclude, grammaticalization surely is a good stimulus for investigating to a certain extent old problems with new methods. The books reviewed here are a nice demonstration of how useful it is to consider grammaticalization as a "metachronic" perspective on language. Clearly, one has to refine the theoretical tools adopted for investigating empirical facts. Moreover, one should not give way to the temptation of including everything under this label. This unavoidably weakens the consistence and the explanatory power of the theory. Nevertheless, my conviction is that the perspective opened by grammaticalization contributes in both empirical and theoretical terms to the enrichment and the improvement of the grammar (and of the grammar-writing) of single languages.

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