

## **‘Direct’ and its synonyms: a case study on the grammaticalization in adjectives**

Category: oral

Theme session: Lexical typology of qualitative concepts

In the recent decades the process of grammaticalization has been attracting much attention in typological work. One of the fundamental issues discussed within this field is what the correlation between the source (lexical) and derived (grammatical) semantics is. Yet, a substantial gap in describing the sources of grammaticalization is that for many researchers attributives are put in the shade of substantives and predicatives (in Heine & Kuteva 2002, for instance, only two adjectives are discussed in this perspective). However, attributive words are frequently subject to grammaticalization and this evolutionary process is still to be studied in more detail.

This research focuses on diachronic processes in attributives that mean ‘direct’/‘straight’ and is based on Russian, Polish, English, German, Yiddish, Italian, Lithuanian, Finnish, Chinese and Japanese. Generally these lexemes are transformed into particles (cf. in this respect the latest debate on grammaticalization and pragmaticalization, see, e.g. Traugott/Dasher 2002, Diewald 2006). These particles fall into two large semantic classes:

A. Contrastive focus particles, which indicate an entity selected from an associative set.

- (1) German: *Gerade du solltest das besser wissen!* ‘It is you who (lit. directly you) should have known it better!’
- (2) Finnish: *Äidin kertoma oli suoraan se mitä olin kuvitellutkin.* ‘My mother’s story was exactly (lit. directly) about what I’d expected’

B. Modal particles, which introduce speaker’s attitude. One of the examples here is emphatic similative. In this case the speaker describes a given situation P1 as similar to a prototypical situation P2, while P2 is rated so highly on his evaluative scale that it was not expected to occur.

- (3) Lithuanian: *Jis tiesiog didvyris.* ‘He is a real (lit. directly) hero’
- (4) Russian: *Stol prjamo lomilsja ot edy.* ‘The table was (lit. directly) groaning with food’

Each of the particles under discussion expresses its own set of meanings (cf. Cienki 1998 on some cross-linguistic differences within one subfield of the semantic domain under study). Most importantly, these meanings correlate with the original semantics of their lexical source, i.e. the difference in semantics of the source adjectives/adverbs influences the meaning of the derived particles. For example, our analysis has shown that the semantics of the emphatic similative is developed from the lexical meaning ‘immediate, having no intermediate states’ (*direct flight*), which accounts for the fact that the German *gerade* that does not have this meaning (in contrast to *direkt*), cannot be interpreted in such a way.

Thus, the typological and diachronic approach to the semantics of particles provides new opportunities for their further research. A detailed description of the source of grammatical meaning enables a researcher both to see the full semantic potential of these lexical items and to come up with a sound comparative analysis of particles in different languages.

## **References**

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