Polysemy of 'again'-markers: evidence from cross-linguistic data

oral / poster

The paper deals with universal constraints on types of polysemy of 'again'-markers (see Wälchli 2006). Uses of these markers cover the <u>repetitive</u> semantic domain that consists of the central meaning of one-time repetition of an event – <u>repetitive proper</u> ('to do one more time') and some other particular meanings such as <u>reditive</u> ('to move back'), <u>restitutive</u> ('to return to the same state'), <u>reconstructive</u> ('to do over, to do better, than before'), <u>responsive</u> ('to do in response') and so on. Repetitive meanings are closely related to the idea of one-time repetition and often co-expressed by the same marker.

'Again'-markers often reveal also polysemy with meanings from other semantic domains, such as verbal plurality meanings, valence-increasing meanings, phasal meanings and some others. The range of meanings that tend cross-linguistically to be co-expressed with repetitive ones and semantic links between them are discussed in the paper.

The study is based on a sample of languages of different genetic and areal affiliation (119 languages). The main data source is grammar descriptions and dictionaries.

The following meanings are particularly taken into consideration:

a) **spatial meanings:**

The repetitive domain links to the spatial one through the <u>reditive</u> meaning ('to move back') which belongs to both of them. In some languages (cf. *-irtne* in Aranda, *-err* in Yanesha) this meaning expand to non-spatial verbs, giving the meaning of <u>associated motion</u> ('to do on the way back'). Repetitive meanings (especially reconstructive) can also develop from <u>prolative</u> (cf. *pere-* in Russian, *gwo* in Cantonese).

b) **verbal plurality meanings:**

Rendering itself a single repetition of event, the repetitive meaning can be combined with meanings that indicate other types of repetition, such as <u>multiplicative</u> ('an event represented as a series of repeated portions'): cf. *-si-* in Mongsen Ao (Tibeto-Burman) and <u>distributive</u> ('an action with a plural participant'), cf. *-li-* in Azoyú Tlapanec (Otomanguean). The same marker in some languages can be used in repetitive contexts and in <u>habitual</u> ones ('to do regularly'): cf. *té* in Nateni (Gur) or *n*-prefixes in Athapaskan languages. The polysemy of repetitive with meanings of many times repetition is however not so frequent as it could be expected.

c) **reversive meaning:**

There are also cases of polysemy of the repetitive meaning and the <u>reversive</u> one ('undoing an action'), cf. *-t* in Fula.

d) **aspectual meanings:**

'Again'-markers do not tend to have aspectual uses. An exceptional case is the phasal domain: the repetitive meaning is often co-expressed with the <u>continuative</u> one ('still, keep on doing'): cf. *ancora* in Italian.

e) **valency-changing meanings:**

'Again'-markers can be used in <u>reflexive</u> context (it is typical e.g. for Oceanic languages). <u>Reciprocal</u> uses of 'again'-markers are also attested (cf. *taligu* in Lolovoli).

The polysemy of 'again'-markers reveals some features that are of interest in context of typology of grammar and grammaticalization theory. In this case one deals not with inflectional markers, but with derivational affixes or free adverbs and particles (less studied from this point of view) and it seems to leave its imprint. E.g. lots of cases can be interpreted as "ruins" of polysemy: the meanings are co-expressed synchronically, but diachronically they both link to a lost meaning and not to each other.

References
Wälchli, Bernhard. 2006. Typology of light and heavy 'again', or the eternal return of the same // Studies in Language 30 (1). P. 69–113.