

RELEXICALIZATION WITHIN GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTIONS¹

Tom Güldemann

Department of African Studies, Humboldt University Berlin and Department of Linguistics, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology Leipzig

1. INTRODUCTION: GRAMMATICALIZATION AND GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTIONS

This article deals with the semantic aspects of grammatical expressions, particularly in relation to lexical meaning. While it is common wisdom in research on grammaticalization and language change in general that lexical meaning feeds the emergence of markers of grammatical functions, the opposite possibility has so far rarely been entertained (see, however, the more recent but influential work by Norde 2009, 2011, this volume).

However, it has been repeatedly recognized that grammatical constructions have crucial semantic import. They not only convey meaning as such but their meaning can also be transferred to other linguistic elements. Thus, grams can take on semantic aspects of their constructional context, as observed by early grammaticalization research:

More interesting from our perspective, however, are the cases [...] of grams whose meaning appears to change due to the linguistic context to which they are restricted by newer developing grams. [...] Since these old forms have so little semantic content of their own, if they survive, they are available to absorb the [...] content of their context. [...] Note that such cases differ from the more usual change by inference in that the meaning they are absorbing comes from the LINGUISTIC context, the context of the clause and its function in the sentence, more than from the general pragmatic context.

Even changes of this sort are highly constrained and in principle predictable. One constraint is that such radical meaning shifts will occur only in the very late stages of grammaticalization, when the original meaning of the gram has so weakened as to be unable to resist infusion from the outside. (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994: 296)

The phenomenon whereby the meaning of a grammatical construction provides decisive input for semantic change in a structurally simpler linguistic sign, here a gram, has not met with any considerable scholarly disagreement. Accepting the mechanism as such, however, raises other wide-reaching problems that have been and still are at the core of debates in grammaticalization research, among them claims about the (uni)directionality of change between the domains of grammar and lexicon. The present discussion concerns, in particular, the following question: Can constructional grammatical meaning also be absorbed by LEXICAL items? Or, more generally, what role can grammatical constructions have for the historical development of lexemes? Data are presented below that strongly suggest this question should be answered positively, by showing that

¹ My thanks are due to Robyn Loughnane and the editors of this volume for fruitful comments and corrections on a previous version of this paper. Glosses of examples have been introduced or adapted by me; the abbreviations can be found at the end of the article before the reference section.

at least two types of lexical items, namely generic speech verbs and generic transfer verbs, can emerge in the context of grammatical constructions that closely match their lexical semantics.

2. THE GENERIC SPEECH VERB ‘SAY’ AND REPORTED DISCOURSE CONSTRUCTIONS

The phenomenon of the development of quotative markers from generic speech verbs like ‘say’ has been a particularly frequent topic in the early grammaticalization research (cf., e.g., such typologically oriented works as Ebert 1991, Frajzyngier 1996, Kachru 1979, Lord 1976, 1993, Saxena 1995, and Subbarao et al. 1983). More recent cross-linguistic and language-specific investigation shows, however, that the impression that this change is a particularly frequent one needs to be reconsidered. Once a broader perspective on reported discourse constructions is taken, it turns out that the constructional context is so rich in semantic and formal aspects that it can exert quite a strong influence on individual linguistic signs occurring within it.

Güldemann (2008: 4-10) argues that reported discourse should be conceived of in a wide sense:

Reported discourse is the representation of a spoken or mental text from which the reporter distances him-/herself by indicating that it is produced by a source of consciousness in a pragmatic and deictic setting that is different from that of the immediate discourse.

The functional domain of reported discourse is associated with different types of linguistic constructions. The bold part in (1) illustrates a canonical reported discourse construction which can serve to illustrate its basic properties.

- (1) *They talked to Peter. **(He said)** he would come later in the afternoon.*
[Quotative index] [Quote]

The central constituent of this construction is the ‘alienated reported text’, henceforth referred to as ‘quote’. As in (1) its content is prototypically ‘externalized’ speech, here Peter’s purported message ‘he would come later in the afternoon’. Besides the quote, the construction also comprises the ‘quotative index’, here ‘he said’. A quotative index is defined as follows (Güldemann 2008: 11):

A quotative index is a segmentally discrete linguistic expression within a binary reported-discourse construction which is used by the reporter for the orientation of the audience to signal in his/her discourse the occurrence of an adjacent representation of reported discourse.

In contrast to common syntactic analyses of binary reported-discourse constructions, which view the quotative index as the constructional nucleus, the centrality of the quote can be supported by a number of arguments, among them that the quote cannot be dropped without compromising the meaning. This is, however, possible with the quotative index. For example, without the quotative index the expression in (1) would become a special type of reported discourse construction, namely free indirect discourse, with largely the same semantic import. While the quotative index is a secondary component of reported discourse constructions, it is of central importance for the following discussion, because it is the locus of what is referred to here as ‘relexicalization’.

Güldemann (2008) provides a cross-linguistic survey of such quotative indexes, focusing on those co-occurring with direct quotes, including a detailed semanto-syntactic analysis of more than 3200 tokens of quotative indexes from 39 African languages. A major conclusion of the survey is that quotative indexes, to the extent that they are present, are not mere predications about a speech

event, but are very often grammaticalized structures whose primary function is to orient the hearer towards the presence of an alienated text in the discourse. However, given that the central meaning of reported discourse is conveyed by the quote, it should come as no surprise that quotative indexes frequently do not contain a lexical item referring to the semantic notion of speech and/or their formal clause nucleus is not tied to a particular morphosyntactic category, such as, notably, verbal predicates. The frequent lack in quotative indexes of a verb with a speech-related meaning is just another variant of the more general theme of the dispensability of the quotative index as a whole. Instead of speech verbs, quotative indexes display a number of other elements which serve as their formal morphosyntactic nucleus; besides grammatically dedicated quotatives, one finds, in particular, the following classes of elements:

- (a) semantically generic verbs of equation, inchoativity, action, motion
- (b) markers of similarity and manner
- (c) quote-referring pronominals
- (d) markers of focus and presentation
- (e) speaker-referring pronominals

That such elements are not confined to ‘exotic’ languages but are a familiar phenomenon in European languages, at least in their colloquial varieties, is shown in (2) with examples from German, Dutch, and Swedish, respectively.

- (2) a. *und er so* ... b. *hij toen van* ... c. *han ba* ...
 and he thus he then of he just
 ‘(and)/(then) he was like, ‘...’

The following short illustration and discussion of the quotative/complementizer *ndé* in Mbódòmò (Ubangi, Niger-Congo) demonstrates how these element types appear to be central to the construction, while the lexical verb with semantic substance is the one that can be omitted. Boyd (1997: 139) explicitly notes the acceptability of the omission of a verb in the quotative index, as in (3)b.:

The complementizer *ndé* may be found also when there is no overt verb in the main clause. These clauses are indirect discourse clauses where the verb is omitted and the complementizer immediately follows the main clause subject.

- (3) a. *à kpàá ndé kpòó bòn-à sék*
 3S find COMP meat remain-PST little
 ‘He found that little meat remained’ (Boyd 1997: 138)
 b. *gǎk ndé òlò lák vòló ...*
 serpent COMP LOG:D leave LOG:D:REFL
 ‘The serpent (said) that they, themselves, leave (now) ... ’ (Boyd 1997: 140)

In the following I will briefly outline a case from the Bantu language family (Benue-Congo, Niger-Congo), in which a so-called ‘manner deictic’ like ‘thus, like this’, a particularly frequent nucleus of a quotative index, which lacked any meaning related to speech and further lacked the full characteristics of a typical Bantu verb, has in some languages become more similar to a canonical generic verb of speech. This reconstructed development is only sketched here; the reader is referred to Güldemann (2002, 2005, 2008) for more discussion and relevant data supporting the

argument. While this case has not been recognized by Norde's (2009, 2011) research on degrammaticalization, it can be characterized according to her typology as a case of 'degrammation', provided 'like this' is viewed as a function word rather than a lexical element.

Overall, Bantu languages display many different patterns of quotative indexes, quite often not based on canonical speech verbs. A particularly wide-spread item is *ti, for which Guthrie (1967-71, vol.4: 105) gives the following reconstruction:

C.S.1727 *-ti that, namely; say ...

Most of these entries [= language-specific cognates] form verbal bases with a limited number of tenses, and from the evidence of their distribution it seems possible that *-TÈ occurred in P[roto]B[antu]-X, probably with the meaning 'that, namely'. The extension of this to provide an all purpose radical, the meaning of which can perhaps be best expressed in English as 'saying', may have taken place later.

I argue that this peculiar semantic and morphosyntactic profile of the reconstructed form is due to its particular historical development, namely that *ti started out as a deficient verbal element meaning something like '(be/do) thus, like this/that'. Some languages still display these characteristics synchronically, for example languages of the inter-lacustrine region, such as Ganda (Bantu E15, Benue-Congo, Niger-Congo). While Ashton et al.'s (1954: 247) description does not directly suggest that the origin of Ganda *ti* is a manner deictic, the examples under (4) nonetheless betray the plausibility of such a scenario.

-TI [...] expresses to act (in any way), do, think, say; -TYO and -TYA? are variations of it. These verbs take the subject prefix in concord with the noun or pronoun to which they refer, but are not inflected for tense.

- (4) a. *ki-buuka* (bwe) ***ki-ti***...
 7-jump:PRS MA 7-like.this
 'It jumps like this ...' (suiting the action to the word [by means of gesture])
- b. *ki-buuka* (bwe) ***ki-tyo*** ...
 7-jump:PRS MA 7-like.that
 'It jumps like that (as I have already told you)'
- c. *eki-kere* *ki-buuka* ***ki-tya***
 7-frog 7-jump:PRS 7-like.what
 'How does a frog jump?' (Ashton et al. 1954: 35)

The speech-related meaning of this deficient verb can be conceived of as a contextually triggered reading in a reported discourse construction, which is sometimes secondarily evident outside this context, as shown in (5).

- (5) *o-tyo*
 2S-like.that
 'That's so! You've said it!' (Ashton et al. 1954: 93)

In more southerly Bantu languages, such as Shona (Bantu S10), the reflex of *ti can still be shown to have a residual meaning of manner deixis and quality, as in (6) and (7).

- (6) *tai-ti* *mu-rume ku-tsvaga namo mu-dzimai ku-onga ndarama*
 1P:HAB.PST-thus 1-man INF-search beeswax 1-wife INF-extract.gold gold
 ‘What we used to do was this: the man went in search of beeswax, his wife panned gold.’
 (Hannan 1984: 646)

- (7) *ndi-no-da n’ombe dzaka-ti*
 1S-PRS-want 10.cattle 10:REL:STAT-such/like.this
 ‘I want such and such cattle ...’ (Hannan 1984: 646)

Its most prominent use, however, is as a finite predicate in quotative indexes with direct reported discourse (and other expressions of mimesis; see Güldemann 2008: 275-94), as shown in (8). This fact tends to mislead scholars working on Shona and other languages with similarly behaving cognates into simply equating the deficient verb with a canonical speech verb ‘say’.

- (8) *nda-ti uya neni*
 1S:PERF-QV come:IMP COM:1S
 ‘I said: ‘Come with me!’’ (Hannan 1984: 646)

In a language like Zulu (Bantu S42) this is even more suggestive at first glance. Here *ti has developed to a stem pair *thi* vs. *sho*, whereby *sho* can be ultimately derived from a morpheme sequence *thi-o, the second element being the so-called ‘o of reference’ which encodes, among other things, previous mention in discourse, i.e. anaphora. Given that Ganda also has *tyo*, as in (4)b. above, it is clear that the opposition in Zulu between cataphoric *thi* and anaphoric *sho*, illustrated in the quotative indexes in (9) and (10), is not a very recent innovation.

- (9) *u-thé:* ...
 3S-QV:PFV
 ‘He said, ‘...’’ (Doke 1992: §820)
- (10) *‘izi-nkabi zi-lahlekile’ se-ku-sho aba-fana*
 10-cattle 10-be.lost:STAT INIT-IP-QV:ANA 2-child
 ‘‘The cattle are lost,’ now say the boys.’’ [‘...’ **that** is what the boys say now] (Doke 1992: §819/20)

In order to demonstrate the dramatically different profile of cognates of *ti in Zulu on the one hand and Ganda and Shona on the other hand, it is useful to start with a description of Zulu *sho*. First, *sho* displays a wide range of suffix inflection, such as perfective *shilo*, negative past *shongo*, applicative *sholo*, neuter passive *shoko*, neuter passive negative *shoki*, causative *shwisa*, and passive *shiwo*. This is opposed to its counterpart *thi* in Zulu, which merely shows the perfectives *thile* and *thé:* and the negative past *thanga*. This is even more so the case for cognates of *ti in Shona, Ganda and many other Bantu languages, which, as deficient verbs, don’t have any suffixal morphology whatsoever.

A second major difference of *sho* to underived reflexes of *ti, both within and outside of Zulu, is that *sho* has clear uses referring to speech outside of reported discourse constructions.

- (11) *u-sho-nje*
 1-say-just
 ‘He merely talks.’; i.e. There is no truth in it (Doke et al. 1990, vol.2: 743)

(12) *sho-no phela si-zwe*
 say-IMP truly 1P-hear:SUBJ
 ‘Say it out then and let us hear (Doke et al. 1990, vol.2: 743)

(13) a. *u-sho amazwi* b. *sho-no iqiniso*
 1-say words say-IMP truth
 ‘He speaks words.’ ‘Speak the truth!’ (Moolman 1984: 138, 140)

Thirdly, and in line with the previous argumentation, *sho* has various nominalizations referring to speech, namely *ukusho* ‘say’ (as in ‘to have one’s say’), *isisho* ‘saying’, and *umusho* ‘sentence’ (Doke et al. 1990, vol.1: 420; 2: 742-3).

Obviously, without a wider language-specific and historical-comparative perspective, the assumption would be that *sho* is, and presumably always has been, a generic speech verb comparable to English ‘say’. It is, however, a fact that *sho* is the transparently derived counterpart of *thi*, which in turn reflects the original and morphologically conservative state of Bantu **ti*. This is still evident in the behavior of Zulu *thi*, both alone and in opposition to *sho*. Examples (14) and (15) clearly show that *thi* is primarily a manner deictic with quality semantics.

(14) a. *wo-thi* b. *u-ngà-thi*
 IMP-QV 2S-NEG.SUBJ-QV
 ‘Do thus! Act like this!’ ‘Don’t do thus!’ (Moolman 1984: 141)

(15) a. *ngi-ya-ku-thi* b. *ngi-ya-ku-sho*
 1S-PROG-IA.OBJ-thus 1S-PROG-IA.OBJ-say
 ‘I am doing thus to it.’ ‘I am saying it.’ (Moolman 1984: 141)

In summary, then, Bantu **ti* ‘(be/do) thus, like this/that’ can be shown to have undergone a gradual change across the family in various respects. In particular, its most progressive reflex, Zulu *sho*, gives evidence for (a) a dramatic increase in morphological verb properties, (b) a decrease in its original semantic component of manner deixis and quality, and (c) an increase in a secondary semantic component of speech, surfacing also OUTSIDE reported discourse. In other words, the central nucleus of a quotative index has become more verb-like and gained a meaning of speech in the constructional context of reported discourse.

Both the formal and semantic sides of the adjustment process are attested in other comparable cases and, importantly, independently of each other. Thus, a formally unremarkable but semantically dramatic change has been reported from Bantu by Devos and Bostoen (2009), who discuss the largely parallel SEMANTIC relexicalization of the generic action verb **gida* ‘do, act’ to a speech verb ‘say’/‘call’ in some southeastern Bantu languages.

The possibility of a linguistic expression being, so to speak, streamlined in FORMAL terms into the canonical type of its construction class is not a particularly new observation. Compare in this respect the case of Latin *est opus* expressing obligation which developed into the inflected modal verb *stuer* ‘must’ in Raeto-Romance (and Old French *estouvoir*; Bernardi et al. 1994).¹ Here, nothing in the meaning has changed: both the old phrasal periphrastic as well as the new lexical predicative expression convey obligation. However, the linguistic material has undergone a dramatic formal adjustment by being aligned with the basic part-of-speech category of verb, which

¹ I am grateful to Mathias Jenny for pointing this case out to me.

is at the core of a very prominent type of modal construction. Within the domain of reported discourse constructions, Güldemann (2008: 365-7, 381-6) gives additional cases of formal adjustment of less verbal or fully ‘un-verbal’ elements towards verbal predicates, both with and without semantic change, from Tonga-Inhambane (Bantu S62, Benue-Congo, Niger-Congo), Kambara (Central Malayo-Polynesian, Austronesian), and Ewe (Gbe, Kwa, Niger-Congo). Many more cases of such degrammation have been studied more systematically by Norde’s (2009, 2011) research. All these data show that the case of Bantu *ti is not an idiosyncratic phenomenon but that, in principle, a ‘say’-verb can be the result of relexicalization from a quotative verb in a reported discourse construction because it refers itself mostly to speech.

3. THE GENERIC TRANSFER VERB ‘GIVE’ AND DITRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

A similar phenomenon can be shown to occur in another expression type, namely ditransitive constructions, illustrated in (16) and defined by Malchukov, Haspelmath and Comrie (2010: 1) as follows:

A ditransitive construction is defined here as a construction consisting of a (ditransitive) verb, an agent argument (A), a recipient-like argument (R), and a theme argument (T).

- (16) *Peter sold me his bicycle.*
 [Agent] [Verb] [Recipient] [Theme]

In the following, a brief outline is given of how verbs of a certain type, which originally do not encode the prototypical semantic notion of transfer of a controlled entity from one to another controller, can come to be re-analyzed as ‘give’ via their regular use in a ditransitive construction.

The verbs at issue here can be called ‘obtainment-possession verbs’ and are all mono-transitive and encode (concrete manual or more abstract) control over one entity by another (usually animate) entity, or the acquisition of such control. The following is a list of typical English verbs falling under this class and their possible sub-classification.

- (17) ‘take’, ‘grasp’, ‘catch’ active (manual) appropriation
 ‘hold’ active (manual) manipulation; stative counterpart of ‘take’
 ‘get’, ‘receive’, ‘obtain’ neutral/less active acquisition
 ‘have’ (neutral) possession; stative counterpart of ‘get’
 ‘be with’ semantically generic accompaniment

At least since Lord (1982, 1993) it is well known that such verbs frequently appear in the V₁ position of classic serial verb constructions, independent of the genealogical and geographical affiliation of the relevant languages, and can develop there to grams of different types. Among other things, such constructions can encode object transfer and are the counterpart of more familiar ditransitive constructions based merely on a verb such as ‘give’. Compare (18) from Akan (Potou-Tano, Kwa, Niger-Congo): the example illustrates in (18)a. that the option of a double object construction is not possible with a definite patient; (18)b. has to be used instead, which is the reflex of an earlier verb serialization in which the initial obtainment-possession verb developed to a direct object marker.

- (18) a. *ɔ-*maa* *me* *siká* *nó*
 3S-give 1S money DEF
 b. ɔ-*de* *siká* *nó* *maa* *me* [-*de* < ‘take’]
 3S-AUX money DEF give 1S
 ‘He gave me the money.’ (Stewart 1963: 147)

The locus of grammaticalization in a ditransitive serial verb construction need, however, not be the V₁ position. An alternative possibility is that the transfer verb ‘give’ in the V₂ position develops to a dative-like marker in and outside this context (cf., e.g., Newman 1996: 211-23). The two alternative outcomes are schematized in (19)b. and (19)c., respectively.

- (19) a. [SUBJECT - [OBT.-POSS. VERB₁ - THEME] - [GIVE VERB₂ - RECIPIENT]]
 b. [SUBJECT - [GRAM - THEME] - [GIVE VERB - RECIPIENT]]
 c. [SUBJECT - [OBT.-POSS. VERB - THEME] - [GRAM - RECIPIENT]]

The following data on obtainment-possession and transfer verbs in several Tuu languages spoken in southern Africa, commonly but misleadingly known under the older term ‘Southern Khoisan’, will show how the constructional pattern in (19)c. can affect the meaning of the initial obtainment-possession verb. The reader is referred to Güldemann (2007, ms.) for more extensive discussion.

Tuu languages are typologically quite comparable to isolating languages in West Africa and East and Southeast Asia. They display a fairly strict template-like pattern in the basic clause, which is schematized in (20).

- (20) [SUBJECT - [VERB₁ - (VERB_n)] - OBJECT - ([PREPOSITION - OTHER]_n)]

The languages rely extensively on verb serialization, predominantly of the ‘nuclear’ type in terms of Foley & Van Valin (1984), in that verb roots occur in an uninterrupted chain, followed in turn by all non-subject participants. Normally, all but the first postverbal participant are marked by a restricted set of prepositions. As a result there are neither double-object constructions nor constructions with preverbal objects as shown in (18)b. for Akan in West Africa.

Ditransitive constructions in the small Tuu family show a bewildering diversity of patterns (Güldemann 2007). Also remarkable for the present discussion is the synchronic and diachronic profile of certain semantically ditransitive verbs. A first case in point is the language complex Taa (Taa-Lower Nossob branch)¹. Unique within the family is the existence of a dative preposition *n/aM^d*, which takes care of most ditransitive relations; it is illustrated in (21).

- (21) *si* *a* //*xaan* *mari* *n/ae*
 1P.E PST show:2 goat.2 DAT:3PRO
 ‘We showed him the goat.’

Comparative data from related languages indicate that this dative marker is likely to be derived from an earlier verb **n/laa* ‘give’ through grammaticalization according to the scenario briefly sketched above and schematized in (19). Compare (22) from !Xam (!Ui branch), in which *n/a* is still attested as ‘give’.

¹ Data without a source originate in an ongoing documentation project on the dialect cluster carried out by G. Boden, R. Kießling, C. Naumann and the author.

- (22) *n/a ki Ohoo /ee*
give 1S.OBL branch that
 ‘Give me that piece of wood!’ (Bleek & Lloyd 1911: 338-9)

Ditransitive constructions in Taa conveying object transfer are largely based on just two ‘give’-like verbs (Traill 1994: 55, 76, 87, 232). The first verb is *!qhãM* (regularly followed by the multi-purpose preposition *kM*). Given that its nominalization means ‘generosity’, it is possibly more specific semantically, meaning something like ‘share’. The second far more frequent verb */uM ~ !ãM* (regularly followed by the dative preposition *n/aM*) is translated by Traill as ‘pass to, give’. The lexeme is sensitive to the number of its object by means of stem suppletion, hence its two forms */uM ~ !ãM*. Like any transitive verb in Taa, */uM ~ !ãM* must agree with the first nominal of its object phrase or incorporate the object pronoun (depending on that element, */uM* can change to */oM*). Compare (23)a., where */uM* incorporates the 1st-person singular pronoun and (23)b. where *!ãM* contains a pronominal index referring to the noun ‘berries’ of agreement class 2.

- (23) a. *sí /ũn Oàa /nãn*
 CONN **give.S:1S** child DAT:1S
 ‘... and give my child (back) to me?’ (Traill n.d.)
 b. *ki !aan n/ai tuu*
 CONN **give.P:2** DAT:1> people.1
 ‘And gives them (berries.2) to the people.’ (Traill n.d.)

The crucial feature of this verb is that it is synchronically polysemous, depending on its constructional context. That is, the ‘give’ reading is virtually restricted to the ditransitive construction with the dative marker *n/aM*. Its meaning in the monotransitive construction is ‘grab, grasp, (catch) hold (of)’, as illustrated in (24).

- (24) *si /oe si n//au /'ang Ouru*
 1P.E **hold.S:3>** problem.3 COM:1S offspring.P
 ‘We get/have problems with my children.’

As proposed by Güldemann (ms.), this second obtainment-possession meaning is the original one and its ditransitive transfer pattern */uM ~ !ãM n/aM* can arguably be paraphrased as [[take/get THEME] [to RECIPIENT]]. However, the ‘give’-reading of */uM ~ !ãM* seems to encroach sometimes on contexts outside the dative ‘give’-construction, which indicates an incipient semantic reanalysis towards a transfer verb. Compare (25), in which it is easier to conceive of the object of */uM* as a recipient than as a theme.

- (25) *suu si /ui tuu*
 feed.first.time IPFV?**GIVE~TO:1>** people.1
 ‘purifying the people’ [lit.: feed to the people]

The best account of the polysemy of */uM ~ !ãM* is that the ‘give’ reading of the ‘take/get’ verb is triggered by its recurrent use in the ditransitive construction with dative *n/aM*. The semantic mechanism in this change can be modeled as a lexical enrichment with the transfer component of the constructional context. That this semantic change turns out to be relatively minor can be motivated by Newman’s (1996: 56-8, 115-8, 243-8) demonstration that ‘take’ and ‘give’ verbs are

semantically close. This is supported by a number of typological precedents for the overall affinity between ‘take’ and ‘give’ and their constructions; compare Wlaschim (1927), Kretschmer and Wahrmann (1931), Janda (1997) for Indo-European; Newman (1996: 115-6) for Sochipan Chinantec, Japanese, Chamorro; and Rice (1997) for Chipewyan. Table 1 summarizes the major similarities and differences between the two verb classes.

Table 1. Semantic affinities and differences between ‘take’ and ‘give’

	Property	‘take’	‘give’
(i)	1st participant = agent	control over state of affairs (and the theme)	
	> control over entity is	assumed	transferred
(ii)	2nd participant = theme	undergoes movement	
	> movement is directed	towards agent	away from agent
(iii)	3rd participant = recipient	no	yes
	> movement is directed	-	towards recipient
(iv)	Clause structure is	monotransitive	ditransitive

The Tuu family provides a further example of the proposed change from a ‘take/get’ to a ‘give’ verb, in this case, however, far more advanced than the one in Taa. Example (26) illustrates the Taa verb *saM* ‘get’.¹

- (26) *sán tháa*
 get:5> thing.5
 ‘find the thing’ (Traill 1994: 186)

The Tuu language Nlng (!Ui branch) possesses a likely cognate verb *saa* ‘give’, used in a ditransitive construction with indirective alignment, as schematized in (27) and illustrated in (28).

(27) [SUBJECT - VERB_n - RECIPIENT-*a* - THEME]

- (28) *hng n//ae saa ha n/ng*
 3H.P then give 3H.S:DAT blanket
 ‘Then they give him the blanket.’ (T.G. field notes)

In view of the plausible assumption that *saa* ‘give’ in Nlng originally meant ‘get’, as *saM* in Taa still does, it is conceivable that the transfer reading of **saa* ‘get’ arose by merely adding a recipient to its original monotransitive construction. Given this origin of *saa*, one is tempted to still paraphrase an example like (28) as [get RECIPIENT THEME], as in colloquial English *Get him a knife!*; synchronically, this is unwarranted, though, in view of the lack of any language-internal clues of that origin,

The major conclusion from the above Tuu data is that a ‘give’ verb can be the result of relexicalization from an obtainment-possession verb in a ditransitive construction referring to transfer. This potential historical relation between obtainment-possession and transfer verbs has great potential for clarifying a historical problem associated with disposal constructions and object marking in Sinitic, as discussed by Chappell (2006, in press). That is, the central zone of Sinitic

¹ The verb has also grammaticalized in Taa into a lexically conditioned preposition.

languages (Xiang, Gan, Hui, southern Wu, many central and southern Mandarin dialects) shows a pattern of polyfunctionality that has so far evaded a plausible typologically motivated explanation: grammaticalized object markers in disposal constructions of the type shown in (18)b. above are apparently cognate with verbs of giving (and helping). Compare (29) from Changsha Xiang (Sinitic, Sino-Tibetan) showing this polysemy with the verb *pa*⁴¹.

- (29) a. *ma*³³ *ma* *ei* *pa*⁴¹ *ŋo* *lian*⁴¹-*k*^h*uai*⁴¹ *tei*¹³ *lo*
 mother PART give 1S two-CL money PART
 ‘Mum, give me two dollars please.’
- b. *pa*⁴¹ *tɛ*^h*yan*⁴¹ *fu* *ta*⁴¹-*k*^h*ai*³³
OBJ window strike-open
 ‘Open the window!’ (Chappell 2006: 466)

In general, there is a strong tendency to try to account for synchronic patterns of polyfunctionality by means of ‘canonical’ grammaticalization from a lexical to a grammatical item. The Sinitic phenomenon would then have to be explained according to the picture in Figure 1. The problem is that there is no fully convincing semantic motivation, nor clear cross-linguistic precedents for a change from ‘give’ to an object marker.

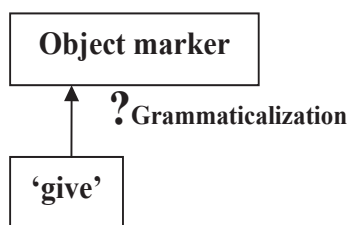


Figure 1. Modern object marker–‘give’ polysemy in central Sinitic

The present concept of a constructionally induced relexicalization, in conjunction with canonical grammaticalization provides, however, an elegant alternative hypothesis. That is, that a lexical item can undergo both processes simultaneously with the loss of its original semantics. Such a scenario is bound to lead to a kind of ‘perfect crime’: the synchronic coexistence of two historically secondary semantic profiles, a grammatical(ized) function and a lexical meaning, is by default but erroneously pressed into a generalization of the type shown in Figure 1.

The alternative explanation for the situation in Sinitic should now be evident. In a first step, one and the same obtainment-possession verb underwent two different changes depending on the context, namely (a) grammaticalization to an object marker in a disposal construction, which is cross-linguistically widely attested, and (b) relexicalization to ‘give’ via a ditransitive transfer construction, as attested in the Tuu family. In a second step, the innovative ‘give’ meaning is transferred to contexts other than the original constructional trigger, potentially ousting its parallel and original obtainment-possession meaning. This would yield a semantic map as in Figure 2, whose two implied diachronic changes are each more plausible than the single change shown in Figure 1.

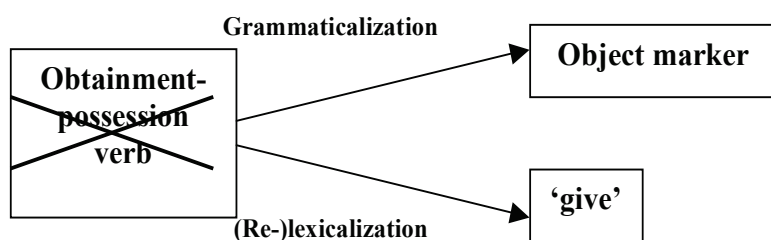


Figure 2. Plausible semantic map of the Sinitic object marker–‘give’ polysemy

4. SUMMARY

I have argued above that certain grammatical constructions can, in various respects, be the cradle of new lexical items, notably reported discourse constructions for the emergence of generic speech verbs and ditransitive transfer constructions for the emergence of generic transfer verbs. Güldemann (2008: 527-9) presents other potential lexicalizations via quotative indexes of binary reported discourse constructions, such as ‘call’, ‘want’, ‘order’, thereby proposing additional candidates for similar (re)lexicalization scenarios within constructional or idiomatic expressions, adding to the inventory of possible degrammation scenarios.

I have also shown that the constructionally triggered changes at issue have both a semantic and a formal component, whereby the two are in principle independent of each other, because the cases reported above show varying distributions of the two. The general phenomenon of quotative markers becoming more verb-like involves processes which are purely formal in nature. The concrete history of the Bantu quotative verb **ti* involved formal and semantic adjustments simultaneously in order to yield a verb like Zulu *sho*. As mentioned, both scenarios could be handled conveniently as degrammation in terms of Norde (2009, 2011), if the input is viewed as grammatical rather than lexical.

However, the relexicalization changes of the action verb **gida* towards ‘say’ in Bantu and of the obtainment-possession verbs /*uV* ~ !*ãM* and **saa* towards ‘give’ in Tuu are by and large semantic. This type of development is difficult to handle in Norde’s (2009, 2011) degrammaticalization typology, if belonging there at all. While the relevant linguistic signs gain in semantic substance, they do not undergo phonological strengthening or recategorialization; hence, one is not confronted with a typical case of degrammation. Future research must show where such cases of constructionally mediated relexicalization can be placed in a fuller typology of changes straddling both lexicon and grammar.

In semantic terms, the changes discussed here are in various respects parallel to those referred to in the initial quotation by Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca (1994). Recall in particular the two constraining circumstances as preconditions for the constructionally induced semantic change at issue there. First, the grammatical context is associated with a sufficiently concrete meaning. Second, the element undergoing the relevant enrichment is itself semantically generic and thus susceptible to change.

Both aspects are relevant for the process of relexicalization proposed here. The two expression types discussed above, namely reported discourse constructions and ditransitive transfer constructions, convey relatively concrete world-referring meaning and this is matched by a certain lexeme class, viz. generic speech verbs and generic transfer verbs, respectively. As expected, the new semantic property of the emerging lexeme is only as concrete or generic as the construction itself is. Moreover, crucial semantic components of the relevant construction are recurrently

indicated by constituents other than the relevant clause nucleus and these provide sufficient semantic clues for an appropriate interpretation. This obviously facilitates the use of a ‘non-canonical’ clause nucleus, that is, one which has only some meaning components of its target of change or is even devoid of most of them. Thus, in reported discourse constructions, the quote itself already refers to speech, which makes a verb of speech in the quotative index dispensable. In the relevant ditransitive constructions, the occurrence of a third participant encoding the recipient implies transfer semantics, which renders the use of a monotransitive obtainment-possession verb sufficient.

The two case studies also show that there are potentially very different degrees of semantic readjustment in relexicalization: while the change from an obtainment-possession to a transfer verb only involves a relatively slight semantic enrichment, the conceivable development of a highly bleached quotative to a verb ‘say’ virtually implies the full absorption of the constructional meaning.

Apart from pointing out a still neglected mechanism of possible meaning change, the present discussion further enriches the more general debates in grammaticalization research, among them that of unidirectionality. Since the semantic changes reported above are not cases of grammaticalization, they do not contradict such claims as the following:

Most notably, grammaticalization does not provide evidence of narrowing of meaning.
(Hopper & Traugott 1993: 97)

However, the semantic and morphosyntactic processes at issue occur within a grammatical construction and imply a directionality that is certainly the opposite of the commonly assumed generalization about the relation between lexical and grammatical properties in language change, thus supplementing Norde’s research on degrammaticalization.

Another important observation for future research, especially for cases yet to be ascertained historically, is that the generalized assumption of grammaticalization proceeding from a lexical to a grammatical item, or, more generally, from a concrete to a more abstract meaning can be a trap, not because the generalization is wrong but because synchronic facts may no longer provide all the relevant evidence. That is, the synchronic coexistence of any two meanings or functions in one linguistic element can be the secondary outcome of two separate processes, so that they must not be interpreted by default as linked by a single change, here a grammaticalization path. The schema in Figure 3, which is a generalized version of Figure 2 above, shows what can be called a historically truncated semantic map: two synchronically attested cognates are not related directly to each other but only via another item that is no longer attested. Such a dilemma, previously recognized in the research on semantic maps (cf., e.g., van der Auwera and Plungian 1998: 113, Haspelmath 2003: 236-7), can only be resolved if the historical investigation goes beyond language-internal data by including historical-comparative information, as well as existing knowledge about semantically and/or functionally motivated and typologically attested cases of meaning change.

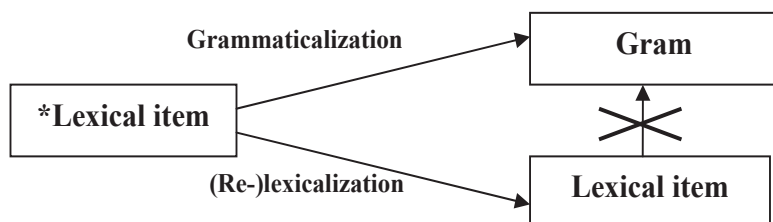


Figure 3. Possible semantic map after loss of original lexical stage

Since not many cases of relexicalization have been claimed and documented so far, it is clear that more research is necessary before the overall importance of such changes can be determined and their regularities ascertained more conclusively. A crucial stage has not yet received any considerable attention in the above discussion, namely the last step of transferring the new lexical-semantic reading to contexts outside the relevant construction. This would be the precondition for a complete relexicalization process.

It would also be interesting to investigate implications of individual relexicalization processes for the semantic analysis of the target lexemes. What is clear from the above is that such basic lexical concepts as ‘give’ and ‘say’ need not be basic from a historical perspective, irrespective of whether they are universal lexical-semantic primes or not. It is hoped that future research will deal with these and many other questions about lexical and grammatical meaning and their mutual relationship.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANA anaphoric reference, AUX auxiliary, CL classifier, COM comitative, COMP complementizer, CONN clause connective, D dual, DAT dative, DEF definite, E exclusive, H human, HAB habitual, IA inanimate, IMP imperative, INF infinitive, INIT initiative, IP impersonal, IPFV imperfective, LOG logophoric (pronoun), M mora, MA manner, NEG negation, OBJ object, OBL oblique, P plural, PART particle, PERF perfect, PFV perfective, PRO anaphoric pronoun, PROG progressive, PRS present, PST past, Q quotative, QV quotative verb, REFL reflexive, REL relative, S singular, STAT stative, SUBJ subjunctive

Arabic number followed by S/D/P: person category

Arabic number without S/D/P: agreement class

REFERENCES

- Ashton, Ethel O. et al. 1954. *A Luganda grammar*. London: Longmans.
- Bernardi, Rut, Alexi Decurtins, Wolfgang Eichenhofer, Ursina Saluz & Moritz Vögeli. 1994. *Handwörterbuch des Rätoromanischen N-Z*. Zürich: Offizin.
- Bleek, Wilhelm H. I. & Lucy C. Lloyd. 1911. *Specimens of Bushman folklore*. London: George Allen.
- Boyd, Virginia L. 1997. *A phonology and grammar of Mbóðòmò*. Ph.D. thesis: University of Texas at Arlington.
- Bybee, Joan L., Revere D. Perkins & William Pagliuca. 1994. *The evolution of grammar: tense, aspect, and modality in the languages of the world*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Chappell, Hilary. 2006. From Eurocentrism to Sinocentrism: the case of disposal constructions in Sinitic languages. In Ameka, Felix, Alan Dench & Nicholas Evans (eds.), *Catching language: the standing challenge of grammar writing*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 441-486.
- Chappell, Hilary. in press. Pan-Sinitic object markers: morphology and syntax. In Guangshun, Cao, Hilary Chappell, R. Djamouri & Thekla Wiebusch (eds.), *Breaking down the barriers: interdisciplinary studies in Chinese linguistics and beyond*, 2 vols. Taipei: Academia Sinica.
- Devos, Maud & Koen A. G. Bostoen. 2009. DO/SAY polysemy and the origin of quotative markers in Bantu. Paper presented at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea, Universidade de Lisboa, September 9-12, 2009.
- Doke, Clement M. et al. 1990. *English-Zulu/Zulu-English dictionary*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

- Doke, Clement M. 1992 [1927]. *Textbook of Zulu grammar*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Ebert, Karen H. 1991. Vom Verbum dicendi zur Konjunktion - Ein Kapitel universaler Grammatikentwicklung. In Bisang, Walter and Peter Rinderknecht (eds.), *Von Europa bis Ozeanien von der Antonymie zum Relativsatz, Gedenkschrift für Meinrad Scheller*. Arbeiten des Seminars für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft 11. Zürich: Universität Zürich, 77-95.
- Foley, William A. & Robert D. Van Valin. 1984. *Functional syntax and universal grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frajzyngier, Zygmunt. 1996. *Grammaticalization of the complex sentence: a case study in Chadic*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Güldemann, Tom. 2002. When 'say' is not say: the functional versatility of the Bantu quotative marker *ti* with special reference to Shona. In Güldemann, Tom & Manfred von Roncador (eds.), *Reported discourse: a meeting ground for different linguistic domains*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 253-287.
- Güldemann, Tom. 2005. The history of quotative predicatives: Can lexical properties arise out of a grammatical construction? Paper presented at the International conference 'New reflections on grammaticalization 3', Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, July 17-20, 2005.
- Güldemann, Tom. 2007. 'Back to normal?' - ditransitives in the Tuu family. Paper presented at the Conference 'Ditransitive Constructions', Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology Leipzig Leipzig, November 23-25, 2007.
- Güldemann, Tom. 2008. *Quotative indexes in African languages: a synchronic and diachronic survey*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Güldemann, Tom. ms. Using minority languages to inform the historical analysis of major written languages: a Tuu perspective on the 'give' ~ object marker polysemy in Sinitic. Submitted to *Journal of Asian and African Studies*
- Guthrie, Malcolm. 1967-71. *Comparative Bantu*, 4 vols. Farnborough: Gregg Press.
- Hannan, Michael. 1984. *Standard Shona dictionary*. Harare/ Bulawayo: College Press.
- Haspelmath, Martin. 2003. The geometry of grammatical meaning: semantic maps and cross-linguistic comparison. In Tomasello, Michael (ed.), *The new psychology of language: cognitive and functional approaches to language structure*, vol. 2. Mahwah, New Jersey/ London: Lawrence Erlbaum, 211-242.
- Hopper, Paul J. & Elizabeth Closs Traugott. 1993. *Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Janda, Laura A. 1997. GIVE, HAVE, and TAKE in Slavic. In Newman (ed.), 249-265.
- Kachru, Yamuna. 1979. The quotative in South Asian languages. *South Asian Languages Analysis* 1.63-77.
- Kretschmer P. & P. Wahrmann. 1931. Literaturbericht für das Jahr 1928. *Glotta* 19.153-231.
- Lord, Carol. 1976. Evidence for syntactic reanalysis: from verb to complementizer in Kwa. In Steever, Sanford B., Carol A. Walker & Salikoko S. Mufwene (eds.), *Papers from the parasession on diachronic syntax, April 22, 1976*. Chicago Linguistic Society 12: 179-191.
- Lord, Carol. 1982. The development of object markers in serial verb languages. In Hopper, Paul J. & Sandra A. Thompson (eds.), *Studies in transitivity*. New York/ San Francisco/ London: Academic Press, 277-299.
- Lord, Carol. 1993. *Historical change in serial verb constructions*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Malchukov, Andrej L., Martin Haspelmath & Bernard Comrie. 2010. Ditransitive constructions: a typological overview. In Malchukov, Andrej L., Martin Haspelmath & Bernard Comrie (eds.), *Studies in ditransitive constructions: a comparative handbook*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1-64.

- Moolman, M. M. K. 1984. The defective verbs -thi and -sho in Zulu. *South African Journal of African Languages*, Suppl. 1: 135-144.
- Newman, John. 1996. *Give: a cognitive linguistic study*. Berlin / New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Newman, John (ed.). 1997. *The linguistics of giving*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Norde, Muriel. 2009. *Degrammaticalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Norde, Muriel. 2011. Degrammaticalization. In Narrog, Heiko & Bernd Heine (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of grammaticalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 475-487.
- Rice, Sally. 1997. Giving and taking in Chipewyan: the semantics of THING-marking classificatory verbs. In Newman (ed.), 97-134.
- Saxena, Anju. 1995. Unidirectional grammaticalization: diachronic and cross-linguistic evidence. *Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung* 48.350-372.
- Stewart, John M. 1963. Some restrictions on objects in Twi. *Journal of African Languages* 2.145-149.
- Subbarao, K. V. et al. 1983. The verb 'say' in South Asian languages: a study in linguistic convergence. In Mukerjee, Aditi (ed.), *Language change and language variation*. Hyderabad: Osmania University Publications, 89-103.
- Traill, Anthony. 1994. *A !Xóõ dictionary*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.
- Traill, Anthony. n.d. Uhbuku's spoon and other dangers: !Xóõ texts on then and now. Unpublished manuscript.
- van der Auwera, Johan & Vladimir A. Plungian. 1998. Modality's semantic maps. *Linguistic Typology* 2.79-124.
- Wlaschim, Katherine. 1927. Studien zu den indogermanischen Ausdrücken für geben und nehmen. Ph.D. thesis: Universität Wien.