

## Historical and comparative perspectives on the grammaticalization and subjectification of causal discourse markers

Liesbeth Degand (UCLouvain), Jacqueline Evers-Vermeul (U. Utrecht), Benjamin Fagard (U. Paris 7) and Liesbeth Mortier (UCLouvain)

### Introduction

The diachronic development of discourse markers often involves a process of '(inter)subjectification' (cf. Traugott & Dasher 2002; Athanasiado, Canakis & Cornillie 2006), a shift from meanings pertaining to the characterization of the objective world to meanings involving the expression of personal attitudes of the speaker (subjectification) to meanings concerned with the interaction between speaker and hearer (i.e., intersubjectivity).

However, it is less obvious that the semantic change of discourse markers also involves a structural type of diachronic change: 'grammaticalization' (cf. Onodera 2000; Brinton 2002; Günthner & Mutz 2006).

### Research question

This paper discusses the relation between (inter)subjectification and grammaticalization in the area of causal discourse markers, focussing on the following questions:

1. How do (inter)subjectification and grammaticalization interact in the diachronic development of discourse markers?
2. What is a suitable method to study their interaction?

### Methodology

We will start with the second question, and discuss four different comparative methods (see Table 1) that, together, provide converging evidence to answer the first question.

Table 1. Methodologies for grammaticalization research

	same texts	different texts
same period	(1) analyses of present-day translation corpora	(3) comparison of present-day spoken and written language
different periods	(2) analyses of Bible translations from different periods	(4) analyses of various texts from different periods

Methods 1 and 3 give insight into the semantic fields of the discourse particles and show what the relevant linguistic alternatives are. Method 3 shows diachronic change "in progress"; methods 2 and 4 show actual semantic and/or structural diachronic changes.

### Results

Prior and ongoing studies on the Dutch causal connectives *want*, *omdat* and *aangezien* and the French causals *car*, *parce que* and *puisque* indicate that:

- method 1 may bring to light phenomena of "oversubjectification" together with under-use of word order variation (cf. *aangezien vs. puisque*, Degand 2004);
- method 2 should reveal whether "translation equivalents" (both semantically and structurally) remain stable in diachrony;
- method 3 has shown that *car* and *parce que* show divergent semantic profiles in written (Degand & Pander Maat 2003), but not in spoken data, with a strong subjectification of *parce que* (Simon & Degand 2007); *want* and *omdat* show divergent semantic profiles

both in writing and in speech, with *want* being more subjective than *omdat* (Spooren *et al.* in press);

- method 4 revealed that *parce que* shows a clear subjectification line in diachronic data, while *car* remains relatively stable throughout the centuries (Degand & Fagard 2007); in Dutch the diachronic data show a fairly stable semantic profile for both connectives, not straightforwardly supporting the subjectification hypothesis of discourse markers, but supporting the grammaticalization of objective meaning for the V-late position (Evers-Vermeul 2005).

Confronting the results of these different methodologies applied to the same set of discourse markers should help us determine the contribution of each of them when trying to disentangle the relationship between (inter)subjectification and grammaticalization.

## References

- Athanasiadou, A., Canakis, C. & Cornillie, B. (eds.) (2006). *Subjectification: Various paths to Subjectivity*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Brinton, L.J. (2002). *Historical Pragmatics and the Diachronic Study of Pragmatic Markers: a Reassessment*. Paper presented at the Twelfth International Conference on English Historical Linguistics. University of Glasgow, Scotland. August 21-26, 2002.
- Degand, L. (2004). Contrastive analyses, translation and Speaker Involvement: the case of *puisque* and *aangezien*. Michel Achard and Suzanne Kemmer (eds.) *Language, Culture and Mind*. CSLI Publications, 251-270.
- Degand, L. & Fagard, B. (2007). (Inter)subjectification des connecteurs: le cas de *car* et *parce que*. Presentation at *The International Conference on Change and Variation in Romance*, Porto 13-15 December 2007.
- Degand, L. & Pander Maat, H. (2003). A contrastive study of Dutch and French causal connectives on the Speaker Involvement Scale, A. Verhagen & J. van de Weijer (eds.) *Usage based approaches to Dutch*. Utrecht: LOT, 175-199.
- Evers-Vermeul, J. (2005). *The Development of Dutch Connectives. Change and acquisition as windows on form-function relations*. PhD dissertation, Utrecht University.
- Günthner, S. & Mutz, K. (2006). Grammaticalization vs. Pragmaticalization? The development of pragmatic markers in German and Italian. In: Bisang, W., Himmelmann, N. & Wiemer, B. (Eds.), *Grammaticalisation and its background: lexicon, morphology, pragmatics and typology*. Berlin: Mouton.
- Onodera, N. (2000). Development of *demo* type connectives and *na* elements: Two extremes of Japanese discourse markers. *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 1/1, 27-55.
- Simon, A.C & Degand, L. (2007). Connecteurs de causalité, implication du locuteur et profils prosodiques. Le cas de *car* et de *parce que*. *Journal of French Language Studies* 17, 323-341.
- Spooren, W., Sanders, T., Huiskes, M. & Degand, L. (in press). "Subjectivity and Causality: A Corpus Study of Spoken Language". Rice, S. & Newman, J. (eds.). *Empirical and Experimental Methods in Cognitive/Functional Research*. CSLI Publications.
- Traugott, E.C. & Dasher, R.B. (2002). *Regularity in semantic change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.