

## Category change in English with and without structural change

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Changes of word class (category) have an important bearing on language change more generally. In this paper I offer a partial taxonomy of such changes, using a range of data from the history of English, and consider the part they play in grammaticalisation.

Some category changes result from an ambiguous context in which either of two categories can fill a functional slot, while the two categories concerned are very similar to each other in that they share many features and differ largely by having different values for the same one parameter, for example Noun and Adjective in English acting as premodifier. Determining the moment of transition is difficult and leads to the question of whether such changes occur stepwise or via a period of indeterminacy or under-determinedness. As far as the topology of the syntactic tree is concerned, however, there is no structural change above the affected node or its phrasal projection. The attested change from Adjective to Determiner belongs under grammaticalisation. Depending on the analysis chosen there must be local changes to the syntactic configuration, but overall there is no large-scale structural change.

In other cases, the different labelling of one node corresponds also to a clear structural difference between the presumed starting and finishing states, with a changed syntactic configuration. Once again there may be no obvious moment of transition in the historical data. An additional question here is whether conventional accounts of reanalysis, which I will review, are adequate for cases such as these. Here we might consider the lexicalisation of *sort/kind/type* nouns + *of* into phrasal Determiners, or the emergence of existential *there* as a dummy Pronoun from an Adverb.

There is a third situation, highly relevant to emergence: the gradual appearance of a new category altogether and its syntactic consequences. Examples – perhaps the only ones in the historical period of English – are Modal and Determiner. This can be regarded as a variant of the second type, in that there is a category change and associated structural reorganisation.

A taxonomy of category changes will lead to a clearer understanding of the relationship that gradience holds with syntax and semantics in general and with grammaticalisation in particular. I expect to be able to show that a construction-based analysis is the most promising avenue for capturing such changes.