

## **Construction types in grammaticalization**

### **An attempt to establish a ‘constructionist’ grammaticalization scenario**

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The particular relevance of contextual factors in grammaticalization has long been acknowledged. In recent studies, the successive stages of grammaticalization processes have been associated with specific types of contexts, whereby the notion of ‘context types’ has been often related to the notion of ‘construction’. Though scholarly definitions of the notion of ‘construction’ as well as that of ‘context type’ may significantly differ, there is general agreement that they are closely connected to each other.

In this paper, we suggest that ‘context types’, as they have been treated in grammaticalization studies (e.g. Diewald 2002, Heine 2002), and ‘constructions’, as they are represented in the framework of Construction Grammar (e.g. Fillmore/ Kay/ O’Connor 1988, Goldberg 2006), can be equated with each other. Starting from this assumption, we aim at proposing a ‘constructionist’ grammaticalization scenario, i.e. a scenario which links successive diachronic stages of a grammaticalization process with particular construction types. For this, we will use the concepts of ‘formal or lexically open idioms’ and ‘extragrammatical idioms’ proposed by Fillmore/ Kay/ O’Connor (1988) and integrate them into the model of relevant context types in grammaticalization proposed by Diewald (2002).

We propose the following correlations:

At the first stage of grammaticalization, i.e. in untypical contexts, existing constructions are used. Even if new readings of constructions and constructional combinations are possible (arising via conversational implicatures) they can be usually inferred due to the compositional structure of such forms.

At the second stage, which is identified with critical contexts, new constructions arise that cannot be reduced to a combination of known constructions without losing information. Thus, the notion of critical context can be equated with the notion of ‘extragrammatical idiom’. Importantly, the new grammatical function serves as one of several alternative interpretations of this highly opaque construction. Moreover, this type of constructions tends to disappear in the later development of the grammaticalizing item.

At the third stage, i.e. in isolating contexts, the new grammatical meaning is isolated by the development of specific constructions favoring the new grammatical reading and excluding older (lexical) readings. Such structures only partially resemble other existing constructions and show a unique form-meaning correspondence. Thus, the notion of isolating context can be equated with the notion of ‘formal or lexically open idioms’.

The proposed scenario will be illustrated by several case studies, including grammaticalization processes of modal particles, of modal and evidential auxiliaries, and of complex prepositions, whereby the focus will be on German.

## **References**

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