

## **Construction grammars and grammaticalization**

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Construction grammars are symbolic theories of language, which tie together (as signs) bits of form with frames of meaning, which makes them useful devices for theorizing grammaticalization. Within a construction grammar, we can model grammaticalization in two ways: (i) as (classes of) lexical items undergo grammaticalization their distribution can change from one construction, or class of construction to another; & (ii) constructions themselves can undergo grammaticalization. The kinds of incremental grammatical changes that we frequently see are well accounted for in a model where the units of grammar are symbolic and subject to the same kinds of process that words and categories of words are subject to. Without a grammar of symbolic relations, I argue it is not possible to model the grammaticalization processes that arguably apply to syntactic patterns rather than to words or classes of words.

In this paper, I argue that grammaticalization can happen to constructions, by which I mean that constructions can undergo bleaching, subjectification, and reanalysis. I look at how constructions can change their meaning, and how this is related to their polysemy; at how constructions can undergo subjectification; and at how construction types can be reanalyzed.

I explore these themes in terms of well understood data from the history of English auxiliaries. I present an account of how the constructional story can accommodate the observation that auxiliaries (see Denison 1993/2004; Warner 1993) in English involves a kind of predicative complementation, but a form of predicative complementation which is distinct from normal raising and control because it only involves a single event. I argue that the emergence of auxiliaries involves the grammaticalization of the predicative construction itself.

The second case study exemplifying the general approach is quirky case marking in both earlier varieties of English and Icelandic. These are patterns where the apparent subject of a raising verb surfaces in the 'wrong' (dative) case (Andrews 1982). Similar phenomena are found in south-Asian languages (Bhaskararao and Subbarao 2004). In these cases, the quirky case marked NP meets the usual syntactic diagnostics for a subject, for all that it is in the wrong case. I argue that constructions are made up of smaller constructions, and that semantics can drive a reanalysis of relations like subject-of, which are part of the larger predicative construction, giving rise to a mismatch phenomenon where the morphosyntactic realization of an argument is out of kilter with its syntactic standing. At the same time, nominal case is sensitive to lexical and constructional semantics: crucially here the dative case marking is a consequence of the constructional meaning. Quirky case marking is argued to be an 'interim' construction of the kind that can occur during processes of grammaticalization.