

Grammaticalization of Syntactic Patterns

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Diachronic syntax and the allied enterprise of syntactic reconstruction raise certain methodological and practical issues that do not arise in diachronic phonology and morphology. As is well known the absence of native speakers imposes limits on our knowledge of syntax, but as many of the preserved texts are long and plentiful enough, a solid theoretical syntactic analysis is often possible. The features of subordinated constructions are one example.

Compared with the matrix clause these constructions express minor details in sentence processing. Already in Proto-Indo-European there have been subordinated sentences besides a lot of constructions with infinite verbs or verbal adjectives competing with subordinated sentences. However, apart from the finiteness of the verb there are differences between the two construction types: In the main subordinated sentences have a complementizer, while constructions with participles for example and verbal adjectives have none. The reason for this asymmetry is hitherto unclear. Another difference concerns negation: Participles and verbal adjectives are negated by the outcome of the privative prefix **N*, while in subordinated clauses the finite verb is negated by the continuation of the adverb **ne*. But Greek and Latin, for example, ordinarily use negative adverbs when negating participles, only some fixed archaic constructions point to an earlier time when the privative prefix was used instead, as Homeric Greek *a-ékontos emeĩo* ‘with me being unwilling, against my will’, Latin *mē ĩn-sciente* ‘with me not knowing’; compare also Latin *in-uĩtus* ‘unwilling’ (later replaced by *nōn uolēns* ‘not willing’), *im-prūdēns* ‘not knowing beforehand’ (later *nōn prouidēns*), Avestian *an-usaNt-* ‘not wanting’, Gothic *un-agands* ‘not fearing’. Here, constructions like *a-ékontos emeĩo* apparently show a more nominal character than subordinated clauses with the adverb **ne*. But as the outcome of the adverb **ne* becomes generalized in infinite constructions, grammaticalization of a syntactic pattern took place.

The questions which are answered in the lecture are: Does the use of **ne* in subordinated sentences depend on the occurrence of complementizers? Which are the crucial factors which trigger the generalization of **ne* also in infinite constructions? Is there a general shift from nominalization to verbalization in subordinated constructions in the older Indo-European languages? Is the semantics of the participle or verbal adjective decisive? To give an appropriate answer, firstly semantics and syntax of complementizers and negation in the older Indo-European languages must be studied. Afterwards complementizers and the remnants of the old constructions with negation privative prefix **N* have to be compared. The study refers to the following languages: Hittite, Old Indian, Old Greek, Latin