

Parallel determiner grammaticalization in Late Latin and Middle French

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Late Latin texts (2nd-6th centuries) and Middle French texts (14th-16th centuries) show similar grammaticalization processes within the determiners paradigm. In earlier Classical Latin and early Middle French administrative texts, determiners of the type *aforementioned* had arisen: anaphoric markers in which (i) a past participle of a *verbum dicendi* reinforces the definite description (zero in Latin, *le* in Middle French) and (ii) a locative adverb (*supra-*, *prae-*; *dessus*, *devant*) indicates that the entity referred to has already been introduced in the discourse. Latin forms of this type of markers typically are *supradictus*, *suprascriptus*, *praedictus*, *prae-fatus* etc.; Middle French forms are *le devant dit*, *le dessus dit*, *le dessus nommé* or simply *le-dit*. These determiners, being originally most frequent in administrative texts, are however attested in a rather wide range of literary texts in Late Latin and Middle French during the indicated periods (Norberg 1944, Guillot *et al.* forthcoming).

We will argue in this corpus-based study that the anaphoric markers with *verbum dicendi* at first fulfill a concrete, circumscribed task within the paradigm of the determiners. The reanalyses of the paradigm of the demonstrative determiners in both languages – with *ille* turning into a definite article in Late Latin and the abolition of the *cist-cil* contrast in Ancient and Middle French (Carlier & Goyens 1998, Carlier & De Mulder (submitted), Marchello-Nizia 2001-2006) – resulted in a (temporary) absence of clear anaphoric devices (Harris 1977, Diessel 1999, Himmelmann 1997). This vacuum in text reference is felt in particular in administrative texts where specific, unambiguous reference is required; hence the appeal to ‘new’ anaphoric markers.

The two most frequent variants in both languages are not each other’s net equivalents as to the lexical component: Late Latin favors the use of *suprascriptus*, whereas in Middle French *le-dit* is by far the most frequent form. However, apart from the lexical difference, both variants behave in the same way. For each of these forms we often find abbreviations (*ss* and *le^d*). Given the large diffusion of these forms in different text types, their high frequency and their use in a wide range of contexts, plus the abbreviations, we can state, according to Lehmann’s ([1995] 2002) criteria, that they have grammaticalized into a more common referential determiner, whereas the other variants maintain their referential surplus taken from the lexical component.

It would however be incorrect to conclude that the reanalysis within the paradigm of the demonstrative determiners is the only reason underlying the rise of anaphoric markers with *verbum dicendi*, since this type of determiners has developed – to a certain extent at least – in most vernacular languages in the Middle Ages. The immediate cause might have been the referential vacuum, which is a language internal issue, but the wide diffusion of the markers in the vernacular languages reveals that other mechanisms, not necessarily language internal but rather with a cultural bias, influenced this grammaticalization process (cf. Marchello-Nizia, 2006).

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