

Subjectifying aspect Continuative periphrases in French and Dutch

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This proposal for communication wishes to address the description of French *continuer à Vinf* and Dutch *blijven Vinf* within a dynamic, speaker-based frame of analysis, and by taking into account comparable and translated corpus data.

The focus being semantic-pragmatic, it will be argued that continuative periphrases are polysemous in nature, with meanings ranging from *spatiality* over default focalization of *non-closure* to marked, pragmatically inferable meanings of *counterexpectation* or *(un)desirability*. The speaker is attributed a central role in the selection of one value over the other, as well as a creative power in manipulating certain features for his own communicative benefit.

Translation turns out to be an excellent tool to pick up on those inferred / inferable meanings (e.g. Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg 2004, Dyvik 2005, Noël 2003), but it is expected that a detailed “mapping” of their semantic and pragmatic differences will benefit from a combined corpus approach, taking into account comparable data as well.

Ultimately, this case study hopes to deal with two vital issues in the contemporary debate on grammaticalization. First, it would like to propose that the traditional distinction between *aspect* and *modality* is not as strict as one would like to believe. Periphrases of continuative aspect show that *aspect* is not merely concerned with the “internal temporal constituency” of a situation (cf. Comrie 1976: 3), but may imply a speaker's perspective from which he/she “looks upon an action” (Kruisinga 1931: 221) as well. In terms of grammaticalization, this would entail that the domains of *aspect* and *modality* constitute a grammaticalization chain, with (some) markers of aspect gradually adopting modal(-like) values. Second, this study wants to contribute to a better understanding of *grammaticalization* and its controversial relationship to *subjectification*. Continuative periphrases do not seem to comply with the traditional set of grammaticalization parameters very well, which seems to suggest that their incipient subjectification is a process distinct from grammaticalization. Although this is an opinion which is expressed explicitly by some (e.g. Waltereit 2005: 66), or more implicitly assumed by others (e.g. Breban 2006), it seems that much depends on how one wishes to define *grammar* and *grammaticalization*. In this presentation, I would like to argue in favor of *grammaticalization* as *functionalization*: some lexemes migrate from the lexicon (or the constructional paradigm) to a state in which they come to *function* as markers, a state in which they signal, enhance, detail or disambiguate the interpretation of other elements in the immediate or larger context, both on a discursive and a metadiscursive level. Such a wide-scope view of grammaticalization allows for a full integration of subjectification within the set of changes associated with grammaticalization, and makes separate concepts such as *pragmaticalization* (Dostie 2004) more or less redundant.

References

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