

Implications of a formal idiom for the theory of grammaticalization Estonian Adessive Manner and Cause Adverbials

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It has repeatedly been concluded that grammaticalization theory and Construction Grammar are largely compatible frameworks. The aim of this presentation is to examine a class of expressions for which they yield alternative analyses, and to discuss the implications of this divergence.

The expressions are a class of adverbial NPs from Estonian which have some exceptional syntactic properties. These properties have been interpreted as a result of the grammaticalization of noun forms into postpositions. I will argue that the expressions are better analyzed as licensed by an idiosyncratic but stable and partially productive construction. From this perspective, the grammaticalization analysis appears as an artefact of a model of grammar where syntactic structure reduces to a small number of lexical categories subject to general rules or constraints, i.e. the expressions have been assumed to be undergoing a transition from one category to another because they fit into none of the categories posited by the theory. This case illustrates that the use of the notion of grammaticalization is dependent on the underlying model of grammar and that it is therefore important to base grammaticalization studies on an explicit grammatical theory. At present they can be seen to rest partly on conflicting theoretical assumptions, for example regarding the status of complex syntactic structures. I will propose that the constructional model could be adopted more consistently as the theoretical basis for grammaticalization studies. In order to support this proposal, I will briefly describe two diachronic developments of the expressions under examination which can be related to grammaticalization and lexicalization respectively and which can be seen to be occurring on the level of the construction.

The expressions that I will discuss function as manner or cause adverbials and consist of an action nominal in the adessive case form and its genitive attribute realizing its actor argument:

- (1) Hanza.net uueneb **klientide soovil.**
 Hanza.net renew.pr.3sg client.gen.pl wish.adess.sg
 “Hanza.net is being updated because of the wish of their clients (to meet the expectations of their clients).”
 (www.parnupostimees.ee/130604/esileht/uudised/10048301.php)
- (2) Bulgaaria sammub Euroopa Liitu **Georgi Parvanovi juhtimisel.**
 Bulgaria.nom step.pr.3sg Europe.gen.sg Union.illat.sg Georgi.nom
 Parvanov.gen leading.adess.sg
 “Bulgaria joins the European Union under the leadership of Georgi Parvanov.”
 (euro.postimees.ee/021106/lisad/euro/225956_foto.php)

The properties that have prompted the grammaticalization account of the expressions are the non-referentiality of the noun and the obligatorily binary structure of the phrase. The constructional account is supported primarily by two coercion effects that the action nominals undergo in these expressions and the fact that the expressions are formed on a partially productive pattern. The two diachronic developments to be described are the progressive reduction of the construction through its becoming more and more associated with shorter derivational forms, and the rise of partially lexically filled sub-constructions of the more schematic construction.