

From adjective to prefix
Lexicalization and grammaticalization of French *ancien/ nouveau* + N

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It is a well-known fact that the borderline between syntax and compounding in French is blurred: French compounds often resemble syntactic phrases (e.g. *billet d'entrée* 'admission ticket') (cf. Zwanenburg 1992: 222). In line with Gross (1988), we believe that French compounds can be situated on a continuum by determining their degree of fossilization ("degré de figement"). In more modern terms, this gradual shift from syntax to the lexicon can be described as "lexicalization" (cf. Lehmann 2002, Brinton & Traugott 2005).

In our paper, we will claim that, once lexicalized, some compounds undergo a further process by which they end up as derivations. This claim implies that there is not only a continuum between syntax and compounding, but also between compounding and derivation. In other words, it would mean that, just like Germanic languages, French makes use of "affixoids", i.e. an intermediate class of elements in between stems and affixes (cf. ten Hacken 2000, Meesters 2002, Booij 2005a & 2005b). The process by which the stem of a compound develops into an affix is not an instance of lexicalization, but will be motivated to illustrate a particular case of grammaticalization (cf. Booij 2005a). From a theoretical point of view, this means that lexicalization and grammaticalization will not be considered converse, but complementary (cf. Lehmann 2002, Brinton & Traugott 2005).

Previous studies have shown that prepositions may grammaticalize into prefixes, undergoing an intermediate stage as "prefixoids" (cf. Amiot 2004 & 2005, Van Goethem 2006). In our paper we will extend this perspective, taking Adjective-Noun combinations as our case study. We will investigate whether syntactic Adj-N phrases may also lexicalize into Adj-N compounds and possibly further grammaticalize into Adj-N derivations, which would imply that the adjectival component develops into a prefixoid or even into a true prefix. As a particular case study, we will analyze the French adjectives *ancien* 'old' and *nouveau* 'new'. From a comparative point of view, their study is particularly interesting since their Dutch counterparts *oud* 'old' and *nieuw* 'new' indeed seem to act as prefixoids in words such as *oud-leerling* 'former pupil' and *nieuw-realisme* 'New-realism', in which they can be substituted by the "true prefixes" *ex-* (e.g. *ex-leerling* 'ex-pupil') and *neo-* (*neo-realisme* 'Neorealism').

On the basis of an extended corpus of Adj-N combinations beginning with the French adjectives *ancien/ nouveau*, taken from lexicographical (*TLFi*, *VDFN*) and textual databases (*Frantext*), we will study which stages of the above described lexicalization and grammaticalization processes may be represented in modern French. Gross's (1988) parameters, such as the (im)possibility of nominalization (e.g. *le nouveau livre* – *la nouveauté du livre* vs *le nouveau-né* – **la nouveauté du né*), will enable us to distinguish different degrees of lexicalization between the Adj-N phrases and the compounds. The lexicalized combinations will be further analyzed in terms of their position on the continuum between compounding and derivation. Therefore we will apply semantic, formal and pragmatic parameters of grammaticalization which indicate the degree of *deategorialization* (Hopper & Traugott 1993) of the adjective into a prefix, such as *de-* or *resemanticization* (Lehmann 1995, Marchello-Nizia 2006, ten Hacken 2000), loss of grammatical inflection (e.g. *une nouveau-née/ une nouvelle-née*) and increase in productivity (cf. Marchello-Nizia 2006, ten Hacken 2000).

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Corpus

Frantext: <http://atilf.atilf.fr/frantext.htm>

TLFi : <http://atilf.atilf.fr/tlf.htm>

VDFN : Bogaards, P. (ed.). 1998. *Van Dale. Groot woordenboek Frans-Nederlands*. Utrecht/ Antwerpen: Van Dale Lexicografie.