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METAPHORS, IDIOMS, AND GRAMMATICALIZATION

An important part of Eeva Uotila's work deals with the origin of Finnish vocabulary. As an etymologist she found many aspects of linguistics self-evident, aspects that are now being touted as new achievements. Cognitive linguistics and grammaticalization have been very popular during the past decades. Cognitive linguistics sports theories about conceptual metaphors (e.g. Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987) in which the researchers believe to have found the essence of human language and thinking process. There are likewise theories about *zoomorphic* and *anthropomorphic* models used in explaining the grammaticalization process (Heine 1997).

Etymology deals with the origin, meaning, and form of a linguistic item. Grammaticalization belongs within etymology, but it is narrower in that it surveys only such changes as end up as bound morphemes. Eeva Uotila did not use the term *grammaticalization*, but as an etymologist she was quite familiar with the notion. She shared this with all competent historical linguists. In her study on *hinta* 'price' and *suhta* 'relation' (1990) she writes:

"The preposition cannot have come from nowhere, and neither straight from the base *suhta-*. Most of the Finnish postpositions remain transparent inflected forms of nouns, and *suhteen* 'in relation to smth' is the totally regular genitive of the word *suhde* 'relation'." (Uotila 1990:273; 2000:137).

Another example of Eeva's of grammaticalization, without the name, is the derivatory suffix *-la* meaning 'place' as in *ovelana* 'at the place at the door' has given *ovella* the adessiv in *-lla* (Anttila & Uotila 1984:121-128; Uotila 2000:149-156).

In short, grammaticalization is the evolution of grammatical forms (functional words, affixes, case markers etc.) out of earlier lexical forms.

Grammaticalization is a process of change that produces a grammatical unit (adposition, affixes, etc.), or a weak grammatical meaning gets strengthened (e.g., a derivatory suffix changes into an inflectional one) (Meillet 1948; Traugott & Heine 1991).

Thus grammaticalization means changes in the categorization and semantic coding of words, as when free lexemes change their functions into bound morphosyntactic units. An example from Italian is the original participle *durante* of the verb *durare* 'to last' in giving the preposition *durante* 'during'. Original Pre-Latin noun **touto-* 'people' has ultimately given Italian pronoun *tutto* 'all'.

Pre-Latin **touto-* 'people' > Latin *totus* 'all' > Italian *tutto* 'all'

The Baltic Finnic noun *kansa* 'people' has given the Finnish postposition 'with' *kanssa* and the Estonian Comitative case ending *-ga*.

Baltic Finnic **kansa* 'people' (still Finnish *kansa*) > *kansa-ssa* Iness 'in/among people' > Finnish postposition *kanssa* 'with' > Estonian case ending *-ga* 'with'

The change of lexical into grammatical meaning is a process usually accompanied by the following features:

- 1) certain meaning fields are prone for grammaticalization;
- 2) lexical meaning gets weakened;
- 3) a free lexeme gets bound in its form and/or function;
- 4) the process is gradual (no abrupt changes);
- 5) the resulting grammatical meaning is frequent in use (Anttila 1989 [1972]:149-153; Traugott & Heine 1991:7-9).

The grammatical meaning does not come out of any random lexical base, rather, certain meaning fields favor it. These meaning fields are about the same the world over, usually independent of

any particular culture. Such changing units are concrete words belonging to the central vocabulary of the language and unlikely to be replaced by borrowing. They are frequent in use. A good example are body parts, particularly the following concepts: 'head', 'brest', 'back', 'stomach', 'hand', 'foot'; nature words as orientation terms: 'ground', 'sky'; people: 'person', 'father', 'mother', 'child'. (Swadesh 1951; Gudschinsky 1956; Heine 1991:151-152; Traugott & Heine 1991:7-8.)

The development of a grammatical meaning causes bleaching (*desemantization, emptying*) of lexical meaning and ultimately its loss. One thinks the following mechanisms essential in grammaticalization: metaphoric transfer, metonymic transfer, reanalysis, and analogy. The process often starts with a narrowing of the lexical meaning. At the same time the syntactic bonds of the word get strengthened. The change thus has two sides. Meaning weakens, syntactic bonds strengthen – original meaning has now changed. Next phase is that a speaker reanalyzes the structure and gives it a new function. The word is not reanalyzed as an individual lexeme, but as part of a larger structural frame.

Metaphor and metonymy are considered the most common forces in grammaticalization. At the same time one has emphasized the importance of syntactic links. Metaphor and metonymy are the momenta of semantic change, but these do not necessarily strengthen syntactic bondage. In its essence the metaphor is the same as a simple comparison (e.g., *the girl is beautiful like a rose*), but the difference between them resides in the fact that the metaphor does not tell point blank which feature has been foregrounded. E.g., when the girl has been likened to a rose, the bases for similarity can be all the possible characteristics of the rose — its beauty, color, thorniness, etc. In a simple metaphor the identity of the compared items has been expressed, but in a new metaphoric expression the context tells the identity of the compared items. Without the context a genuine metaphor cannot be understood.

It is different with the so-called dead metaphors (known in the culture) - for them one does not need the context, e.g., when

a person is called an ass, one immediately understands that the stupidity of that person is meant. On the other hand, if another feature is meant, one needs the/a context to understand it. This is why metaphor and metonymy handle images from which many semantic changes originate, but metaphor and metonymy are not yet established expressions so that one could speak of the syntactic bondage of their parts (i.e., words).

Syntactic bondage is a central feature in idioms, but to my knowledge, idioms have been totally neglected in the study of grammaticalization.

The term *idiom* has a very wide content in the English tradition, it covers generally all standard expressions the meanings of whose parts have somehow merged. At one extreme end of the gradience of idioms lie the pure idioms and at the other restricted and unrestricted collocations. In the German and Russian traditions *phraseologism* gives the cover term and the term *idiom* refers only to *pure idioms*. More on idioms and their subgrouping can be found in Makkai (1972) and Fernando (1996).

The essential role of idioms in the grammaticalization process is supported by the fact that the central theoretical claims for the two (idioms and grammaticalization) are about the same.

1) GRAMMATICAL MEANING DOES NOT DEVELOP FROM ANY LEXICAL MEANING

Neither do the idioms spawn in any field. Also here the concreteness of meaning, its generality, and its ties to man are central prerequisites (Vakk 1970). Somatic idioms (which relate to the body) are known as the oldest layer of standard expressions. One can assume that no language lacks them. Why somatic idioms are so general finds its explanation in that one's own body with its actions and feelings is the most immediate sensory frame, and thus provides an excellent launching pad for lively metaphor. A good example for this are measure expressions from body parts, e.g. the meaning 'in a flash'

Estonian	<i>silmapilksest</i> 'eye'-Gen + 'glance'-Abl
Finnish	<i>silmänräpäyksessä</i> 'eye'-Gen + 'blink'-Iness
German	<i>im Augenblick</i>

Body parts with clear and central function give most somatic idioms, all over the world. The same tendency lurks in grammaticalization: e.g. notions like 'head', 'hand', etc., but not innards like 'kidney' and 'spleen/milt' (Heine 1997).

The Baltic Finnic languages display an abundance of postpositions out of body parts. For instance, from the word *head* one has gotten postpositions indicating location, from the word *hand* postpositions indicating possession, and from the words *breast* and *side* postpositions for location. For example:

Finnish	<i>päälle</i> 'on, upon' 'head' - Allat
	<i>päällä</i> 'on, on top of' 'head' - Adess
	<i>päältä</i> 'from, off' 'head' - Ablat

2) THE WEAKENING OF LEXICAL MEANING

Idioms are set phrases composed of many words, as simple conceptual units. The joint meaning of the phrase is different from those of the parts freely taken together. An example from Italian:

andare in capo al mondo 'to go to the end of the world'

The conceptual unity of idioms is more important than formal (grammatical) structure. Most of the time the new meaning develops from weakening or blurring of the literal lexical and semantic relations in the phrasal compound.

In learning a foreign language we have all had this experience that in translating an idiom word by word we end up with jibberish.

3) THE CHANGE OF A FREE LEXEME INTO A BOUND UNIT IN EITHER FORM OR FUNCTION OR BOTH

The next central step in grammaticalization - the development of a syntactically tight whole – works also in idioms. But in different subgroups of idioms the weakening of the original lexical meaning is rather different.

Pure/frozen idioms have almost totally lost their the original meanings of lexemes, in *semi-idioms* the meanings of the parts have blurred, and the parts in *idiomatic expressions* the independent meanings have bleached.

All idioms display structural bondage of parts, and this leads to lexical shifts from original word meanings to bound syntactic and morphological items. This structure is strictest in pure idioms, loosest in idiomatic expressions. The inner boundness of the whole is the criterion with which one distinguishes idioms from free connections of words – in particular, idiomatic expressions are difficult to spot.

From the three subgroups mentioned, I think only the semi-idioms and idiomatic expressions are connected with grammaticalization. Pure idioms are very stiff / frozen, and they do not allow any switch between lexemes. Their essence is unique, specific, and thus their frequency is not high. In semi-idioms the changeability of words is looser. Idiomatic compounds can be taken as models of the structure. E.g. the structural model of the Estonian idiomatic expression *mustades värvides nägema*, literally: 'to see in black colors', but meaning 'to see something gloomier than reality' would be the following:

however, illuminate only the functioning of figurative language and not how metaphors and metonyms develop into grammatical units. One must further point out that Heine's models serve only to explain proportional analogy, similarity of relation, e.g.:

HEAD 'BODY PART ON TOP' > CONCEPT 'OVER' AS
POSTPOSITION

Heine's models are of no use for explaining more complicated semantic meaning contents. In the following I will present an example from Estonian to illustrate the connection between a standard expression and grammaticalization.

Estonian *pea* 'head, top part of body' has grammaticalized into various adpositions, the most common of which is the local series *peal*, *peale*, *pealt* 'on, onto, from'. The Estonian postposition *peast* renders also quality of state of being, e.g.

väsinud peast 'in a tired state'
punasest peast 'as red'

Both the adposition *peast* and its head are in the elative. The structure can be replaced by the essive, e.g.

väsinuna 'in a tired state'
punasena 'as red'

Both cases designate being in a state: the elative covers a change in the state of the subject, the essive existing and continuing state. The postpositional structure

NOUN + *PEAST*

acts as a combination of the said meanings and designates such existing state as also implies change.

Meanings rendered through adpositions and case endings are similar, but adpositions make meaning nuances more precise. Case

semantics is much more indeterminate, and this is why case ending and adposition are not freely interchangeable, although both might be possible as far as grammaticality is concerned.

Peast –idioms depicting change of state are so common in Estonian that they allow all nouns expressing quality of being – without restrictions – as their heads. The language has undergone a change in which the whole structural frame (or earlier idiom) has acquired a grammatical meaning. There are also a few idiomatic expressions difficult to classify whether they would be postpositional structures or idioms, e.g.:

pimedast peast '[from a dark head] = as blind'

There are also obvious idioms with the structure

NOUN + ELATIVE+ *PEAST*

pimedast peast 'without checking, in blind faith'

heast peast '[from good head] without reason, suddenly'

omast peast '[from own head] on one's own, without asking for advice'

All three patterns exist side by side in the language, but the linguist has to see how they connect and interact. Curiously, linguists intoxicated with grammaticalization just keep explicating the starting point of the process with metaphor, and ignore the rest (cf. Heine & Traugott 1991; Heine 1997).

Etymological research was and still is the basis for studying the processes of language change. Thus also when one studies grammaticalized features, and before one presents models etc., one has to find out whether one has to do with inheritance or borrowing. Eeva Uotila's work on the origin of Finnish vocabulary solidly supports the study of grammaticalization, which today is becoming a stronger and stronger fashion. In addition to the examples given above I want to refer to Eeva's study of young

Germanic loans in Finnish dialects, in which, among other things, she has suggested a loan source for the preposition *turki* 'through' (Uotila 1974:128-133; 2000:73-78). One can learn so much from her work - how much one can see depends on the seer herself.

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