

Laurel J. Brinton and Elizabeth Closs Traugott,  
*Lexicalization and Language Change*

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## 1. Introduction

Problems of lexicalization were rather minor ones when grammaticalization began to emerge on the scene of historical linguistics in the 1980's. This state is well illustrated when we compare the Grammaticalization versions written by Hopper and Traugott in 1993 and 2003 respectively. In the former version, only half a page (1993: 127) is devoted to lexicalization with examples of *up* (prep → verb), and *du* and *tu* (pronouns) → *duzen* and *tutoyer* (verbs), as counterexamples to unidirectionality in grammaticalization. The new version (2003), on the other hand, devotes more pages (133-35) to lexicalization problems relating to such notions as 'degrammaticalization,' 'exaptation' and 'univerbation.'

In recent years, however, lexicalization has been discussed extensively in Moreno Cabrera (1998), Wischer (2000), Campbell (2001), Brinton (2002), Lehmann (2002) and Himmelmann (2004).

## 2. Outline of the book

It is in this context that lexicalization needs clarification in relation to grammaticalization. How far has Brinton's and Traugott's book, *Lexicalization and Language Change* (2005) clarified these relations and related problems? This book is organized as follows.

Chapter 1, Theoretical contexts for the study of lexicalization and grammaticalization, sets the scene for the discussions on various facets of lexicalization and grammaticalization in the following chapters. Concepts of the lexicon are accounted for in various terms. Distinctions between lexical and grammatical categories are discussed particularly in relation to the word classes (or parts of speech), which differ from language to language. Common concepts derived from typological and cognitive generalities regarding lexical and grammatical classes are non-discreteness, gradience and continuum of productivity. Also lexicalization and grammaticalization are introduced both from synchronic and diachronic perspectives, and these concepts are taken for discussion in the following chapters.

Chapter 2, Lexicalization: definitions and viewpoints, examines the diverse ways in which lexicalization has been understood in the literature. According to the authors, the following broad definitions can be found:

- (a) ordinary process of word formation,
- (b) processes of fusion resulting in a decrease in compositionality,
- (c) processes of separation resulting in an increase in autonomy

In (a), Brinton and Traugott discuss compounding, derivation, conversion, clipping and ellipsis, blending, back formation, initialism/acronym, coinage or root creation, and metalinguistic citation. They also introduce various opinions on institutionalization, sometimes regarded as a precursor of lexicalization.


In (b), they argue again about various phenomena in terms of lexicalization as fusion, such as syntagm > lexeme, complex > simple lexeme, demorphologization and phonogenesis, idiomatization and demotivation.

The (c) processes seem to be opposite to those in (b). They are often called 'degrammaticalization.' Those processes are mostly concerned with the shift of an affix into an independent item, such as the genitive *-s*, and the use of *ism* as a noun.

Chapter 3, Views on the relation of lexicalization to grammaticalization, discusses similarities and differences between lexicalization and grammaticalization. Both lexicalization and grammaticalization may involve fusion, whose examples are, however, variously conceptualized by different researchers. Complex prepositions, such as *in case of* and *on top of*, multi-word verbs, such as *turn up* and *face up to*, composite predicates, such as *take action* and *make use of*, and phrasal discourse markers, such as *I think* and *y'know*, are taken up for discussion as examples of fusion and coalescence treated either as lexicalization or grammaticalization.

Unidirectionality is also observed both in lexicalization and grammaticalization. Some linguists (Ramat 1992, for instance) argue that lexicalization is the reversal of grammaticalization, which is called degrammaticalization, that is a shift from a grammatical item to an independent item. Particular difficulty with fusion is the status of inflection and derivation. A general tendency of grammaticalization is: phrase > compound > derivation > inflection (86). This cline is convincing in that synchronically, the structure of words is 'base + derivation + inflection' (e.g. *kind* + *-ness* + *-es*). Inflection does not interfere with the meaning, that is, it is more grammatical than derivation. On the other hand, derivation is sometimes more concerned with some aspectual types, such as iterative and continuative than inflection. Another example is: 'keep *-ing*/keep on *-ing*,' which, by the way, is claimed to be a type of degrammaticalization by Van der Auwera (2002: 24-25). According to the OED (*s.v.* *keep*, *v.* 40.b.; 51.), 'keep *-ing*' appears in 1794, and 'keep on *-ing*' appears in 1856. Both express progressive aspect, but the latter type reinforces the aspect by means of *on*, which is again more derivationally involved. This shows that grammatical properties, such as aspect, are not always represented by inflection only. This view is supported if we consider the development of phrasal verbs from the prefixed item attached to the verb to a detached particle following the verb, expressing more abstract and aspectual

Chapter 4, Toward an integrated approach to lexicalization and grammaticalization, examines various problems of lexicalization and grammaticalization. As basic assumptions of lexicalization and grammaticalization, Brinton and Traugott allow for constructions, gradience and degrees of productivity. Their model assumes that phonology, syntax and semantics are linked. These correlations of categories along continua are summarized as follows (92):

Level	Continuum		
			
Lexicon	Lexical		Grammatical
Category	Open/Major		Closed/Minor
Syntax	Free		Obligatory
Semantics	Contentful		Functional
Morphology	Nonproductive	Semiproductive	Productive

G<sub>1</sub> = periphrases, e.g. *be going to*  
 G<sub>2</sub> = semi-bound forms like function words and clitics, e.g. *must*, *'ll*  
 G<sub>3</sub> = affixes such as derivational morphology that changes the grammatical class of the stem; most especially inflectional morphology including zero inflection.  
 L<sub>1</sub> = particularly fixed phrases, e.g. *lose sight of*  
 L<sub>2</sub> = complex semi-idiosyncratic forms, e.g. *unhappy*  
 L<sub>3</sub> = simplexes and maximally unanalyzable idiosyncratic forms, e.g. *desk*, *over-the-hill*

Lexicalization is the change whereby in certain linguistic contexts speakers use a syntactic construction or word formation as a new contentful form with formal and semantic properties that are not completely derivable or predictable from the constituents of the construction or the word formation pattern. Over time there may be further loss of internal constituency and the item may become more

lexical.

Grammaticalization is the change whereby in certain linguistic contexts speakers use parts of a construction with a grammatical function. Over time the resulting grammatical item may become more grammatical by acquiring more grammatical functions and expanding its host-classes.

After examining a variety of properties attributable to lexicalization and grammaticalization, Brinton and Traugott summarize degrees of parallelism between lexicalization and grammaticalization as follows (110). They see the notion of gradience and gradualness as central to the integrated model of lexicalization and grammaticalization.

Table 4.4

	Lexicalization	Grammaticalization
a Gradualness	+	+
b Unidirectionality	+	+
c Fusion	+	+
d Coalescence	+	+
e Demotivation	+	+
f Metaphorization/metonymization	+	+
g Decategorialization	—	+
h Bleaching	—	+
i Subjectification	—	+
j Productivity	—	+
k Frequency	—	+
l Typological generality	—	+

'+' characteristic of    '—' not characteristic of

We could add some other properties to Table 4.4 (110), such as fossilization, semantic opacity and reanalysis which are all common to lexicalization and grammaticalization. Seen in this way, both processes are very similar, but still separate in view of lexical and grammatical items derived and adopted through these processes.

Chapter 5, Case studies, examines some case studies from the history of English

which illustrate problematic/gray areas between lexicalization and grammaticalization. They are: (i) the development of present participles, (ii) multi-word verbs, (iii) composite predicates, (iv) adverbs formed with *-ly*, and (v) discourse markers.

- (i) The present particles represented in the form of V-*endel-ing* have developed various functions, roughly split into three types:
  - a. *be* + *-ing* → grammaticalization
  - b. present participial Adj (e.g. pleasing, revolving) → lexicalization
  - c. present participial Prep/Conj/degree Adv (e.g. considering, saving; piping, passing) → short-lived case of grammaticalization
- (ii) Multi-word verbs treated in this book are phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs. The former type, since the particle expresses aspect, is a case of grammaticalization, and the latter is a case of lexicalization, where the functional replacement of prefixed verbs by prepositional verbs takes place.
- (iii) Composite predicates are divided into the following two types:
  - lose sight of* type → lexicalization
  - give a response* type → grammaticalization
- (iv) Adverbs are a heterogeneous class, a kind of refuse bag into which a variety of items are thrown. The ending *-ly* can be regarded either as derivation or inflection depending on criteria. Brinton's and Traugott's conclusion is that *-ly* is becoming grammaticalized, and individual adverbs formed with it have a tendency to grammaticalize (132).
- (v) After examining opinions regarding discourse markers either as uses of lexicalization or grammaticalization, the authors conclude that the development of discourse markers is a process of grammaticalization.

Chapter 6, Conclusion and research questions, includes the following research questions:

- (a) Possible and impossible changes
  - (b) Transitions from one category to another
  - (c) Typological shifts
  - (d) Discourse types
  - (e) Language contact
- (a) raises the question whether a particular change in affix is from derivation to inflection or vice versa. For example, adverbial *-ly* can be considered either as derivational or inflectional.
  - (b) assumes a model of grammar which pay attention to gradience and gradualness.
  - (c) addresses to which extent any particular instance of lexicalization or

grammaticalization is harmonic with or analogical to an ongoing larger change, and to what extent sets of such changes may trigger it.

- (d) suggests possibilities of lexicalization and grammaticalization being studied in the context of text types now available.
- (e) alludes to the role played by Latin and French throughout ME and EModE in the contribution to the morphosyntax and semantics of English, and briefly to pidgins and creoles for the study of borrowed lexicon and the development of word formation strategies.

### 3. Discussion

Fischer (2007: 227-29) criticizes Brinton and Traugott for the distinction between lexicalization and grammaticalization, saying that they are on the different levels on which the processes take place (228). One property which distinguishes grammaticalization from lexicalization is 'decategorialization,' which happens with changes on the more abstract token/type level, and is naturally bound up with other properties, such as 'bleaching,' 'subjectification,' 'frequency' and 'productivity.' That is, these differences depend on the basic token/type level that the process starts out from and not on any differences within the processes themselves (Fischer 226-27). While I understand Fischer's assertion that the strict division between grammatical and lexical is not possible, I cannot see much difference between Fischer's and Brinton and Traugott's opinions, if examined in detail. It seems to me, however, that considering various linguistic phenomena, the distinction between lexicalization and grammaticalization is valid and necessary. Let us get into some problems with their discussions.

In their case studies, Brinton and Traugott discuss 'composite predicates.' They divide composite predicates into the 'give/have/take' type and the 'lose sight of' type, concluding that the former type is a case of grammaticalization, and the latter a case of lexicalization in view of their respective properties—productiveness and semantic-pragmatic richness in the former type, and non-productivity in the latter. There are, however, some problems with this treatment. The first problem is what to include as composite predicates. The 'lose sight of' type is usually not a composite predicate. Quirk et al. (1985: 1530) call it a phrasal lexicalization. If this type is regarded as a composite predicate, we will include many others, such as *set fire to*, *take advantage of* and *give rise to*. One syntactic difference is that in the composite predicates a preposition is optional, but in the phrases *set fire to* and *give rise to* the prepositions are obligatory. Also in terms of non-compositionality, these phrases are more non-compositional than the 'give/have/take' type. To consider the composite predicates including the 'lose sight of' type as cases either of lexicalization or grammaticalization would not be appropriate when we consider such prototypical cases as *today* (lexicalization), and the development of the auxiliary verbs (grammaticalization). As

a matter of fact, there is gradience between these phrases and composite predicates in terms of semantic opacity, frequency and productivity. Take 'take'-composite predicates for instance. Such examples as *take an interest in* and *take delight in* can be considered as composite predicates, while *take advantage of* and *take a fancy to* cannot. From the viewpoint of frequency, *take advantage of* is most frequent, and then *take an interest in*, *take delight in* and *take a fancy to* in this order of frequency based on the British National Corpus. What these instances tell us is that there is no clear-cut distinction between lexicalization and grammaticalization even within the category of composite predicates depending on which criteria to use.

Brinton and Traugott consider discourse markers (or comment clauses) as belonging to grammaticalization, because the development of discourse markers is characterized by decategorialization which is not characteristic of lexicalization. Hopper (1991: 22) defines decategorialization as "[f]orms undergoing grammaticalization tend to lose or neutralize the morphological markers and syntactic privileges characteristic of the full categories Noun and Verb, and to assume attributes characteristic of secondary categories such as Adjective, Participle, Preposition, etc." Since the function of discourse markers is similar to that of adverbs, the process of development is grammaticalization. But at the same time, these markers are highly fixed and very much idiomaticized keeping more independent status than grammatical items. On the whole, comment clauses distinct from discourse markers are nearer to the lexicalization pole than the grammaticalization pole.

On pages 74-76, Brinton and Traugott argue about periphrastic expressions in relation to grammaticalization. The history of subjunctives seems to call unidirectionality into question. It is generally assumed that the inflectional endings *-e* and *-en* in OE have been replaced by the modal auxiliaries, such as *must* and *should*, periphrastic expressions. If we adopt the periphrasis first, reduction second principle, this change will be a counterexample to unidirectionality. But what makes this problem more complicated is the appearance of the so-called American subjunctive (Övergaard 1995), where the ending of a verb is inflectional-zero, such as *I insist that the Council reconsider its decisions*. If we consider this pattern as the deletion of a modal auxiliary, e.g. *should*, this will be a reduction, but tense-zero still remains problematic (for further discussion, see Visser 1966: 843-47). Thus, this process seems cyclic:

inflection → periphrasis → inflection-zero

If this is a grammaticalization process, how can this cyclicity be accounted for?

There are some typological errors. In the middle of page 107, "since it the mechanism..." should be "since it is the mechanism..." On the same page, (point f) should be (point g). And finally on page 131, they give *take a fancy for*, but shouldn't this be *take a fancy to*?

Overall, Brinton and Traugott have done a tremendous job of explicating a jungle of problems relating to lexicalization and grammaticalization hitherto unexplored. This

book is both theoretical and empirical in that many examples and data are presented and examined, and therefore can be recommended to both linguists and philologists.

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