

Call for Papers

Conference at the Institute for Slavic Philology, LMU Munich, 19-20 January 2018

“Pragmaticalization: Language Change between Text and Grammar”

Pragmaticalization is generally seen in the linguistic literature as the process of language change concerning the discursive level of language and resulting in the development of pragmatic functions by linguistic units which once carried lexical or grammatical meaning.

No consensus has coalesced around the status and the (cognitive) mechanisms of pragmaticalization (cf. Erman/Kotsinas 1993, Wischer 2000, Günthner/Mutz 2004, Auer/Günthner 2005, Mroczynski 2012: 85-124, Heine 2013, Degand/Evers-Vermeul 2015, et al.). In general, it concerns linguistic units (words and expressions or simplicials and established constructions or set phrases), that develop towards a *pragmeme*, i.e. units whose meaning unfolds primarily through their use in situative contexts of communication.

A whole array of, e.g., *discourse markers*, *interjections*, *particles*, and *routine formulae* that originate in, e.g., the verbs, nouns, adverbials etc., arise in this way, cf. (1) - (4).

- (1) russ. *Koroče govorja*_{GERUND}, *menja ne ustraivaet takaja situacija*. (Šachmatnoe obozrenie, 2004.06.15)
'In short, I am not satisfied with such a situation'
- (2) poln. *Mocny Boże*_{VOC}! *Cóż tam się dzieć będzie!... Albo i już się dzieje...* (Leon Kruczkowski, *Kordian i cham*, 1932)
'My God, what will happen there?... Or maybe already happens right now...'
- (3) dt. Du bist erkältet, *oder*_{OF.CONJ}? (zit. nach Mroczynski 2012: 91)
'You've caught a cold, haven't you?'
- (4) engl. If a fault develops *you know* you can contact us 24 hours a day... (<http://corpus.byu.edu>)

The pragmaticalized units encode so-called *procedural* information (Nicolle 2011: 406f.). Their pragmatic functions, thereby, encompass the speaker's expression of his/her various emotive, volitional, and cognitive attitudes; they are also linked, e.g., to meta-commented speech, the steering of discourse, a text structuring function (which means the expansion of their scope beyond the sentence boundaries), and the marking of politeness.

At this conference, the process of pragmaticalization is to be seen in relationship to the “classical” concept of *grammaticalization* (cf. Lehmann 1995 [1982]), which describes the movement of a lexical unit towards the grammatical core area of language, i.e. the emergence of grammemes (cf. the so-called “cline of grammaticality”: “content item > grammatical word > clitic > inflectional affix”, Hopper/Traugott 2003: 7; cf. Lehmann 2004: 168-169).

What happens, however, in connection with the phenomenon of pragmaticalization? Can pragmaticalization be seen as a *discrete process of language change*, or should it, rather, be placed at the “*margins*” of *grammaticalization*? Traugott (1982, 1995, 2010, et al.) understands the development of units used to structure verbal communication as grammaticalization and speaks of “subjectivation” or “intersubjectivation” within grammaticalization. Might pragmaticalization, therefore, also be definable as a “grammaticalization of discursive functions” (cf. Diewald 2011) within the discursive province of a more broadly construed conception of grammar (cf. Heine et al. 2013, cf. also ‘*grammaticalization as reduction*’ vs. ‘*grammaticalization as expansion*’, Traugott/Trousdale 2013: 32, 105-112)? Or can pragmaticalization perhaps be elucidated within a framework of “*de-*grammaticalization”, e.g. the movement of a unit on the continuum of the so-called linear-syntagmatic autonomy of linguistic signs (cf. Plungjan ⁴2012: 22, cf. Fig. 1) from a pole of weakly autonomous forms up to a (proto)typical *pragmeme* equipped with its own illocutionary force, or perhaps even being able to constitute an indirect speech act (cf. (1) - (4))? The borders between separate “steps” of the continuum are, thus, often fluid (cf. Fig. 1), cf., on the one hand, the development of reflexive *CA* (*sebja* ‘self’) in East Slavic from a clitic to an affix (postfix) *-sja* (morphologization) and on the other, the use of dative of *sebja* (*sebe*_{DAT}) as a particle¹ (degrammaticalization, pragmaticalization, cf. Graf 2015).

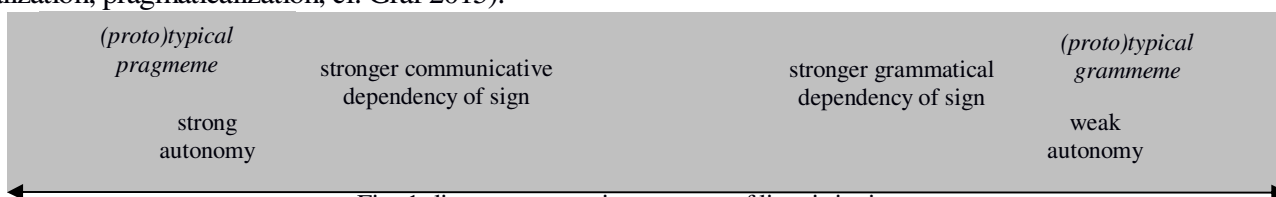


Fig. 1: linear-syntagmatic autonomy of linguistic signs

¹ D. Weiss (2008) speaks in this context of the “lexicalization” of the particle *sebe*.

Both processes (grammaticalization and pragmaticalization)—as well as the process of lexicalization, which leads to the emergence of new lexemes—exhibit somewhat similar phases, such as syntactization and the development of set analytical constructions, semantic bleaching, decategorization, and—to some extent—phonetic erosion. Mroczynski (2012: 115-116) points out, however, that “*discursivization*” (and the associated parameter of the expansion of the structural scope of a unit) is crucial for pragmaticalization.

Prosody also seems to play an integral role in the process of pragmaticalization. Thus, the prosody (or the marking of the discourse marker with a pause and the intonation in the low tonal register) in (5), e.g., is the necessary condition for an adequate interpretation of the polyfunctional Russian unit *izvestno* ‘as is well known’. Without this prosodic marking, *izvestno* could be read as the predicate of the sentence.

- (5) Delu, *izvestno*, vremena a potexe čas. (Jurij Davydov. Sinie tjuľ pany.)
 business:DAT is well-known time and pleasure:DAT time
 ‘Business/Deed, as is well-known, before pleasure’

Discursivization and the increasing role of prosody—along with other parameters—can be traced also with respect to the development of an array of constructions, which serve to depict different speaker’s attitudes to an actual situation p. Therefore, in this way, it appears justified to ask whether establishing such categories—such as the so-called “*inexpectative*” (cf. Weiss 2008, cf. 6) or the *imperativus dramaticus* in Russian, cf. (7), and the *admirative* or *mirative* in Bulgarian (cf. Lazard 1999, Nicolova 2006: 34-35, cf. 8), which are used to express an unexpectedness or suddenness of an event—is perhaps equally connected with pragmaticalization.

- (6) Mal’čik *vzjal* da *umer*. (Weiss 2008: 474)
 Boy take:PST.PF and die:PST.PF
 The boy suddenly died.
- (7) *I prisnis’ mne* v ètu noč’ moja pokojnaja matuška. (Isačenko 1982[1962]: 313)
 And dream:IMP2SG me:DAT at this night my dead mother
 My holy mother indeed suddenly appeared to me in my dreams that night!
- (8) *Tuj ne bilo* zlatu! Nikakvo zlatu *ne e*. (Nicolova 2006: 34)
 There was no gold! No gold at all!

Thus, in (6) we are dealing with a “pseudo-coordinative construction” with a “desemanticized” first verb (‘*vzjat*’ ‘take’) in *inexpectative* usage (Weiss 2008: 475-476, 504). In (7), the imperative loses its actual function and “solidifies” in the form of the 2.PSG, through which the speaker reflects his astonishment at the unexpected circumstances. Likewise, in (8), *admirative* meaning is expressed by means of a construction (the so-called *l*-form and loss of the auxiliary). *Intonation*, however, plays an important role in expressing *admirative* meaning, which is why this usage is also called an “*exclamative*” (cf. commentary on Ivancev (1978[1976]: 90f. in Sonnenhauser 2012: 352).

Additionally, the *truncated perfect constructions* in Serbian, which in particular contexts enable an *admirative* interpretation of an utterance (e.g., Jao! On izmislio_{PST.PF.3SG}? ‘Oh! He made it up?’, cf. Meermann 2015: 102), also appear to have taken a path of pragmaticalization.

Although research on language change primarily concerns the diachronic analysis of the development of language units over longer time spans, the study of contemporary language also allows for the discovery of an array of simplicials and constructions that solidify in a particular grammatical form and establish—under the influence of various, often extralinguistic factors—different pragmatic functions in some contexts.

Interesting in this respect is the increasing use of, e.g., the perfect contemporary Russian verb *uvidet’sja*, functioning as farewell formula *uvidimsja*_{sec:REFL.PFV.1PPI} (roughly in engl. ~ ‘I’ll see you tomorrow’). As a farewell, the Russian perfective reflexive verb *uvidet’sja* loses its verb valency and is used in the 1PPL form as a sendoff for news anchors or meteorologists. At the same time, this farewell also ensures a casual atmosphere at the end of a newscast. Whether the emergence of this farewell has to do solely with the influence of English (cf. ‘see you later’) or with a general relaxing of the norm in Russian at the turn of the 21st century remains an open question. Krongauz (2011 / 2007: 240-241), for one, stresses that “traditional” Russian (Soviet) etiquette has recently shifted to a more European conception.

These examples show that pragmaticalized forms tend to initially develop in spoken language. Thus, sometimes a sociolect, e.g. teen slang, and its increasing circulation through various media serves as a sort of accelerant (“trigger”) for establishing a pragmaticalized expression. This is what happened, for example, in the case of the emergence of the Czech and Slovak construction *Karla Gotta nemusím* (‘Karel Gott is not my thing’ / ‘Karel Gott is not a must’). Having emerged from teen slang, *Karla Gotta nemusím* is now also used in other

registers as a “conventionalized form-function unit” (Hansen, Nekula, Banášová 2011: 267), meaning ‘to not like’. The verb *muset* (engl. ‘must’)—which, in its function as a modal verb, demands an infinitive follow it based on its verb valency—governs the accusative in the new construction. Changes in modal verb valency are also visible in the presidential campaign slogan of Barack Obama *Yes, we can!* Thus, the modal verb *can*, in a particular context, develop into the monovalent main verb, itself implanted within various, cross-linguistic communication situations as an interjection meant to increase listeners’ cohesion, solidarity, and motivation, cf. (9).

- (9) Dajte ofisnomu proletariju zakričat’ „yes we can!“ (Viktor Pelevin. Bétman Apollo, 2013)
Let the office proletarian shout out loud: “yes we can!”

These aspects attest to the fact that further, more detailed analysis of pragmaticalization is needed to provide more precise insight into the particularities and mechanisms of this process of language change.

Contributions on Slavic languages are particularly desired, in addition to pragmaticalization/grammaticalization research more generally.

The following issues could be discussed at the conference:

- pragmaticalization and grammaticalization – two sides of the same coin?
- parameters, mechanisms, and factors of pragmaticalization
- pragmaticalization and lexicalization
- the role of implicature and presupposition in pragmaticalization
- pragmaticalization and prosody
- pragmaticalization and the development of discourse markers, politeness markers, routine formulae, forms of address, interjections, particles (diachronic as well as synchronic analyses are welcome)
- pragmaticalization and language contact
- pragmaticalization and gender
- pragmaticalization and construction grammar
- pragmaticalization and ‘patterns’ in linguistic usage
- digitalization of pragmaticalized units

Additional themes on pragmaticalization are also welcome.

The talks are to be is **20 minutes**, followed by a **10-minute discussion**.

Conference languages: German, Russian, English

Those interested should submit an **abstract** (PDF or Word format) of about 300 words by **3 August 2017** to the following address:

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Notification of acceptance: by mid-August 2017

Conference: 19-20 January 2018, LMU Munich, Institute for Slavic Philology (Chair of Slavic Linguistics, Prof. Dr. Ulrich Schweier)

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Prof. Dr. Maksim A. Krongauz, Higher School of Economics (HSE), Moscow

Prof. Dr. Daniel Weiss, University of Zurich

Prof. Dr. Björn Wiemer, University of Mainz

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