Grammaticalization of sentence adverbs and particles revisited

Katrin Axel-Tober[1], Marco Coniglio[2], Kalle Müller[1], Katharina Paul[2]
[1]University of Tübingen, [2]University of Göttingen

This paper carves out the commonalities in the grammaticalization of sentence adverbs (SAdv) and modal particles (MPs) as elements of the high functional domain (cf. Cinque 1999, Diewald 2011) from a mainly syntactic point of view. The diachronic development of both categories has been described as processes of grammaticalization, subjectification and/or pragmaticalization with a focus on semanto-pragmatic factors (cf. Traugott 2010, Diewald 2011). These elements may develop from different sources, in particular, MPs are often assumed to result from a variety of source categories such as adjectives, low adverbs, SAdv, focus particles and conjunctions (Burkhardt 1994, Diewald 2011). However, this picture might be deceptive due to the large synchronic heterosemy of these elements.

In this paper, we will provide evidence that the source categories and paths of development are much more restricted. In our corpus studies (mostly based on German), we identify two major types of grammaticalization that hold for SAdv and MPs alike:

(i)   Lower event-related adverbials (in a wider sense), e.g. manner, temporal > MPs/SAdv
      e.g. German SAdv and MP *vîl lîchte > vielleicht* (lit. 'maybe'); German MP *aber* (lit. 'but'), German ADJ + *Weise* 'way' > SAdv -*weise*

(ii) Integrated parentheticals > MPs/SAdv
      e.g. English SAdv *maybe*; German *glaub* (lit. 'I think')*, scheints* (lit. 'it seems')

In contrast to semanto-pragmatically-driven accounts, we want to emphasize syntactic ambiguity and reanalysis as crucial factors in both grammaticalization processes (cf. Roberts & Roussou 2003, van Gelderen 2011).

The paths in (i) and (ii) share a common condition: lower adverbs as well as parentheticals can occupy the same syntactic surface positions as SAdv and MPs due to the relatively free word order within the so-called *Mittelfeld* 'middle field' of German. The following historical example shows that what seems to be a manner adverbial derived from the combination of the adjective *erbermlich* 'miserable' with the noun *weise* 'way' (1a) could also get an interpretation as the SAdv *erbärmlicherweise* in Modern German (1b). The modern example in (2) shows that parentheticals may also be ambiguous and get a higher modal interpretation:

(1)   … sonsten weren wir erbermlicher weise zertreten worden …
      a. '... else we would have been crushed in a miserable way ...'
      b. '... else we would have been crushed, which would have been miserable'
      (DTA, Rollenhagen, Gabriel: Vier Bücher [...]. Magdeburg, 1603)

(2)   Das ist, glaub, die Illusion meiner Generation (DeReKo, Weltwoche, 26.09.2013)
      'This is, I believe, the illusion of my generation.'

If we accept syntactic ambiguity as a general condition for the change, this yields the welcome result of ruling out conjunctions like *aber* as a source category, since they never occupy the same syntactic positions as MPs do. Instead, we argue that the MP *aber* developed from a homophonous lower adverb. This is desirable also from a theoretical point of view, since the development from conjunctions to MPs would be a rare instance of degrammaticalization.

Furthermore, in synchronic theory, MPs have been described as weak SAdv (cf. Grosz 2007), which suggests diachronically that MPs are either weak counterparts to SAdv or elements that have been weakened along the grammaticalization cline (cf. Hopper and Traugott 2003). However, in the few cases where a homophonous SAdv and MP exist in Modern German, the SAdv does not seem to be a suitable source for the MP: e.g. while *vielleicht* 'maybe' as a SAdv has a weakening function, the MP in the sentence *Du bist vielleicht ein Frechdachs! 'Aren't you a rascal!'* has a strengthening effect. This suggests that MPs are not further grammaticalizations of SAdv, but weak grammaticalized counterparts in the discourse (e.g. *ja*, *doch*) or modal (e.g. *wohl*, *glaub*) domains.

Thus, we propose a unified syntactic analysis that explains the grammaticalization of SAdv and MPs as a development from the lower lexical layer or parentheticals into weak and strong elements of the high clausal functional domains restricted by the factor of syntactic ambiguity.

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